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## THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION

It is now becoming widely recognised that the dislocation of modern civilisation, with its scientific temper, humanistic spirit, and secular view of life, is largely the result of the loss of a spiritual dynamic indispensable to the integration of society.

In this volume the theological foundations of society are examined sociologically with a view to determining the part played by religion in binding together individuals in an ordered life in the family, the community and the nation. The problems discussed are of fundamental importance at the present juncture.

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**THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION**

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# THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

*By*

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## PREFACE

During recent years it has become increasingly clear to thinking people that the whole social structure of the modern world is in a perilous condition, and unless the foundations are strengthened at certain vital points there is a very real danger of collapse. The causes and the faulty spots are variously estimated, but generally it is supposed that economic and political factors play a very large part in the phenomenon. This is doubtless true, but, nevertheless, these disturbing influences are actually more in the nature of effects produced by deeper considerations arising out of the fundamental needs of the individual and of society as a whole.

In his efforts to determine his place in the universe, control his destinies and regulate his family, tribal and national relationships, man has arrived at certain fundamental religious concepts and evaluations which have consolidated the social structure and supplied a dynamic indispensable to the integration of his communal life. For some years these forces have been weakening, and to-day we are witnessing the inevitable consequences in the dislocation of every phase of human life and activity. The whole body fitly framed together is out of joint.

To some observers of the present situation it seems that civilization having run its course is about to destroy itself. This may be a possible danger resulting from the loss of the spiritual dynamic which provides the energy necessary for sustained effort, especially when internecine strife between nations and classes becomes the only cohesive force. On the other hand, the passing away of a highly artificial and temporary phase of abnormal prosperity, with a false conception of progress, is opening the way to a return to the earlier and more normal type of society. The totalitarian states at least have discovered wherein lay the great strength of former cultures, and by the powerful aid of ideologies, mythologies, eschatologies and devotion to a Leader raised to quasi-divine status, they have virtually re-created a social order on a "religious" basis. If the resultant product has within it the seeds of its own destruction, it is because they have adopted a false dialectic, an erroneous interpretation of history and a perverted standard of values.

In view of the prevailing conditions, the time is ripe, it would seem, for a consideration of the social function of religion. For a quarter of a century I have given some thought to the problem, and following the lead of my friend Professor Malinowski, who is the pioneer in this department of research, for several years now I have had in mind the



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production of a scientific treatise dealing with those aspects of the question which fall within the domain of my more specialized studies. While I have not abandoned this intention, the invitation to contribute a volume to the present series seemed to afford an opportunity to set forth, as a preliminary statement, the more specifically theological issues in a form intelligible, as I hope, to the readers for whom these books are designed. And after all it is the theological question, I suppose, that is uppermost in the minds of most people outside rather restricted academic circles.

Nevertheless, the problems which confront us at the moment in Church and State have behind them a long and complex history, and to understand their true significance they must be examined in relation to their context in the past in which they have arisen. Therefore, the anthropological evidence, however briefly it may have to be reviewed in a volume of this nature, has a very real relevance. As Mark Pattison has said, "of all social forms, religious society, more than any, demands of those who are called to guide or govern it a knowledge of its history." Thus, for example, we cannot evaluate correctly what has been taking place recently in Spain unless we review the events in the light of the historical movements which have shaped the present situation. The same is true of

the other stirring happenings in contemporary Europe, most of which are essentially religious in origin however much secondary political, social and economic causes have intervened. Behind the whole fabric of modern culture lies a complex development of thought and practice based ultimately upon certain fundamental theological affirmations which all students of the phenomena should endeavour to appreciate.

But the spiritual factors that determine the social structure are not mere functions of society. They are autonomous principles which transcend the social order and its modes of organization. Therefore, it is not enough merely to show how they have come into being and affected cultural evolution by consolidating the structure of the body politic. If such an analysis suffices for the purposes of the anthropologist and sociologist as such, the theological reader and the great mass of mankind are not content to stop at this point. They are concerned, and rightly, with the objective intellectual validity, or ultimate spiritual value, of these beliefs and practices. Therefore, in this volume an attempt has been made to interpret the integrative function of religion in terms of the eternal verities which, as I believe, are enshrined in Christianity. In conclusion I desire to express my thanks to my wife and my colleague, the Rev. J. N. Schofield, Lecturer

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in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies in Leeds University, for their valuable assistance in connexion with the proofs. My friend Professor M. J. Stewart, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, in the midst of his multifarious activities made time to read a section of the book and put me wise on certain technical matters from the abundance of his specialized knowledge. Acknowledgment should also be made of the care taken by the publisher's reader in verifying references and of his helpful marginal comments.

E. O. JAMES.

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## CHAPTER I

### PROVIDENCE

At this critical juncture in world affairs the place of religion in human society is a question of paramount importance, and if we are not to be content with a superficial answer devised, as is only too frequently the case, to serve the interests of some political, economic or theological dictum, it is necessary to go to the roots of the matter. As these are deeply laid in the structure and constitution of human culture the facts can be laid bare only by a comparative study conducted according to the methods and principles of anthropological investigation. When these have been revealed it will be possible to determine the theological and sociological significance of the evidence.

In beginning such an inquiry we have first to decide what exactly is to be included in the survey, for religion has been variously defined and opinions differ concerning the meaning and scope of the term. For our present purpose, however inadequate the definition may be for the more restricted and specialized needs of the theologian or philosopher, we must cast our net as widely as possible so as not to exclude any aspect of the type of human

activity and experience which comes within the range of our inquiry. To this end a belief in the existence of a transcendental reality giving rise to a system of super-causation expressed in rite and myth may be taken as a "minimum definition," since out of this conviction has arisen the whole complex organization and evaluation which may reasonably be regarded as belonging to the category of religion.

Everywhere and at all times, so far as the available evidence is known, sacred rites are and have been performed in order to bring human beings into relation with the supernatural order, and enable them to gain some measure of control over the unpredictable and inexplicable elements in everyday experience. These results may be achieved by the exercise of supernatural powers enshrined in certain individuals and embodied in specific rites and mystic formulæ (spells) without the aid and intervention of any external agent, be it spirit or god. Such a technique is distinct from religious practice properly so-called, and is differentiated by the term "magic," though the two disciplines have many points in common. But unlike religion, magic is essentially a human possession, limited in its operation and carefully restricted in its performance, having no transcendental reference to supra-mundane powers or forces superior to man con-

trolling the processes of nature from without. While it involves the recognition of a supernatural order, it excludes the agency of gods and spirits. 7

Nevertheless, since both magic and religion are specialized types of behaviour directed towards those elements in human experience which fall outside man's empirical mastery of his surroundings and destinies, they are closely related, particularly in primitive states of culture where cause and effect, agent and act are not clearly differentiated. When the universality and continuity of natural causation are not understood, every event arresting the attention and demanding an explanation almost inevitably will be attributed to supernatural forces or powers of some kind, whether they be regarded as transcendent or immanent, religious or magical. In a modern civilized community, however imperfectly the operations of the universe may be understood by the average man, when magic is encountered to-day it is usually as a survival from an earlier and more rudimentary state of culture. In primitive society, on the other hand, the control of natural events by supernatural means is so prevalent that it is impossible to separate the techniques employed into clearly defined categories, labelled respectively as magic and religion. Hence the fallacy of the contention of Hegel and Frazer

that an "age of religion" was preceded by an "age of magic."<sup>1</sup>

As a working principle, therefore, it is convenient to adopt the cumbrous expression "magico-religious" to describe cults which occupy a borderline position about which the framers of general theory are in dispute. Thus, in our present discussion, it will not be possible always to maintain a rigid distinction between the two disciplines in their more rudimentary manifestations since both have played a predominant part in the consolidation of society, and made their contribution to the establishment of the social order. But our main concern will be with the transcendental references which throughout the ages have constituted the dynamic and unifying principle of human groups, ancient and modern, primitive and civilized.

### *The Idea of Providence*

Of these the most fundamental is the notion of a supernatural Providence controlling to beneficent ends the forces of destiny; a conviction which has found expression in a great variety of symbolic forms and concepts conditioned by the powers of the human mind to formulate abstract ideas. Before speculation arose about spirits, separable souls

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. I, pp. 290 ff.; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Pt. I, pp. 234 ff.



and gods, implying a realization of personality in the individual, there appears to have been a reaction to awe-inspiring phenomena which gave rise to the conception of sacredness as a category, corresponding to the divine and the supernatural. With this higher order of reality, however undefined it may have been at first, man sought to enter into relations in order to gain therefrom aid and assistance in the struggle for existence. In a precarious environment with few resources to hand, the maintenance of an adequate supply of the necessities of life must always be an urgent ever-present problem taxing to the utmost human ingenuity at every turn and creating intense emotional situations. Any inexplicable occurrence which arrests attention tends to be attributed to supernatural agencies and influences imperceptible to sense but tremendously real and operative in fact. Consequently, it is treated with awe and respect as partaking of sacredness and mystery, and hedged round with protective taboos. This applies equally to unusual objects or events and the crises in human life and society, such as birth, puberty, marriage, death, the sowing of the crops, the ingathering of harvest, plague, pestilence, famine and drought. On all these occasions health, wealth and prosperity have to be promoted, and disease, famine and misfortune driven away.

In all states of culture, if the human race is to continue to survive, food and children are vital necessities. As Sir James Frazer says, "to live and to cause to live, to eat food and beget children, these are the primary wants of man in the past, and they will be the primary wants of man in the future so long as the world lasts."<sup>1</sup> It was apparently to the conservation and promotion of life that the magico-religious control of the processes of nature in the first instance was directed. Evil to the primitive mind being mainly hunger and barrenness, to seek the good means making alliance with the supernatural sources of fertility, and organizing the life of the community in relation to them. Indeed, the late Sir Grafton Elliot Smith suggested that "the first deity that the wit of man devised to console him with her watchful care over his welfare in this life, and to give him assurance as to his fate in the future," was a life-giving amulet in the form of a cowrie-shell.<sup>2</sup> If this can hardly be accepted as an adequate basis of the idea of God, propagation and the production and maintenance of the food supply doubtless have been the two principal concerns of the human race from its beginning. Around them have collected the religious evaluations summed up in the word "Providence."

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*, Pt. IV ("Adonis," vol. I), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *The Evolution of the Dragon* (Manchester, 1919), pp. 143, 150 ff.

Transcending the natural order of which human society is a part is an undefined supramundane beneficence in which man may have his share. To it he looks for sustenance and the well-being of the community, but he does not make it an excuse for idleness or lack of foresight. As Professor Malinowski says, speaking from an intimate knowledge of the Melanesians, "if you were to suggest to a native that he should make his garden mainly by magic and scamp his work, he would simply smile on your simplicity. He knows as well as you do that there are natural conditions and causes, and by his observations he knows also that he is able to control these natural forces by mental and physical effort. His knowledge is limited, no doubt, but so far as it goes it is sound and proof against mysticism. If the fences are broken down, if the seed is destroyed or has been dried or washed away, he will have recourse not to magic, but to work, guided by knowledge and reason. His experience on the other hand has taught him also, that in spite of all his forethought, and beyond all his efforts, there are agencies and forces which one year bestow unwonted and unearned benefits of fertility, making everything run smooth and well, rain and sun appear at the right moment, noxious insects remain in abeyance, the harvest yields a superabundant crop; and another year again the same agencies bring ill-

luck and bad chance, pursue him from beginning till end and thwart all his most strenuous efforts and his best-founded knowledge. To control these influences and these only he employs magic.”<sup>1</sup>

### *The Totemic Basis of Society*

It is at this point that human efforts have to be supplemented by supernatural aid, and the whole community is under a sacred obligation to maintain the means of subsistence of the group independent of individual requirements. Thus, in Central Australia, where society is organized on a totemic basis, ceremonies known as *Intichiuma* are held when the rains upon which fertility depends are due to begin. Their purpose is the promotion of an adequate food supply on a large scale by men who are themselves generally forbidden to eat the animals or plants whose reproduction they seek to facilitate. According to this supernatural economic system, each tribe is divided into small social groups, or clans, descended, it is supposed, from an animal or vegetable species, or inanimate object, regarded as its totem or sacred ally. So intimate is this association between the totem and the totemite that it constitutes a “blood relationship,” the sharing in a common life-principle, making all members of the same group “one flesh.” Therefore, they may not

<sup>1</sup> *Science, Religion and Reality* (London, 1927), pp. 30 f.

intermarry, and are subject to various other taboos which usually include prohibitions concerning the eating of the totem. Since it is the duty of each clan in this primitive co-operative system to ensure the fertility of its own totem plant or animal by the performance of the prescribed rites (*Intichiuma*), in practice it is acting on behalf of the society as a whole inasmuch as its own members are forbidden to eat of the sacred species with which they are in mystic alliance.

It would seem, therefore, that if each individual is responsible for the tending and maintenance of his own "cabbage patch" by his own unaided efforts, when it is a matter of supernatural control, the community must act as a corporate body, each section making its particular interests subservient to the common weal. Thus, in such a very primitive state of culture as that which prevails among the native tribes of Central Australia, where human existence is thought to depend ultimately on the maintenance of a right relationship between the group and its totemic ally identified with a beneficent Providence, co-operation is recognized as indispensable. At the critical season when rain is absolutely essential for the continuance of man, beast and vegetation, all the spiritual forces of the entire tribe are concentrated upon the one great desire regardless of personal and individual con-

siderations. Society is consolidated and unified as a social organism on the basis of its unity with the supernatural source of its life. By each unit making its independent contribution to the renewal of the vitality of the entire community, the members of the totemic brotherhood are brought into communion with their mystic ally and at the same time with one another, since they are all partakers of the same communal life-essence.

Now it is true that totemism is a specialized form of religious and social organization to which a former generation of anthropologists was inclined to give undue emphasis. Nevertheless, it illustrates the sociological implications of a very deeply laid feeling of affinity with and dependence on a transcendent beneficent Providence, variously named and evaluated. It may have taken a very long time, and required a particular type of environment, for a simple family system to become consolidated into a closely-knit clan organization descended from and in mystical alliance with a sacred species regarded as the receptacle of the communal life, and the common unifying centre of a blood-brotherhood. But once the institution became established it exercised a powerful influence on the social, economic and religious constitution of society.

The notion of the sacred as a providential source

of the food supply and general well-being of mankind, is not confined, however, to groups organized on a totemic basis. Indeed it is a moot point how far the totem can be interpreted in terms of deity at all. Thus, Frazer maintains that it is never a god or the recipient of worship. "A man no more worships his totem and regards it as his god than he worships his father and mother, his brother and his sister, and regards them as his gods."<sup>1</sup> Durkheim, again, contends that the totem is not a divine being approached by prayer and sacrifice, or the recipient of worship, because it is not an individual animal or plant that is made the ally but the species as a whole; that is to say, the life-principle permeating the entire group. It is at once the symbol of the god and of the society because the god and the society are one. "The god of the clan, the totemic principle, can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable which serves as totem."<sup>2</sup> On this hypothesis, what man really worships is society divinized, and the totemic sign is the rallying-point of collective emotion.

<sup>1</sup> *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Pt. IV, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (London, 1915), p. 206.

*The "Group Theory" of Religious and Social Organization*

According to this "Group Theory," religion is "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."<sup>1</sup> It is merely a subjective reflection of society; the expression of the forces by which a social group imposes its will upon the constituent units in just the same way as that imposed by the gods, to secure thereby its own continuance. But while it is true that religion functions as an integral element in the preservation of social structure, to make it only a symbolic representation of the organization and group consciousness of the community evades completely the objective validity of its beliefs in their cosmological character as apprehensions of a Reality transcending alike the human and the natural order.

If for the moment we restrict the argument to the primitive mind with which Professor Durkheim is mainly concerned, it becomes apparent that it reacts in a religious manner quite as readily to the mystery revealed in natural phenomena as to stimuli within society. Moreover, it is certainly

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 47.



not correct to limit the practice of religion in this state of culture to great seasonal ceremonies like the Australian Intichiuma mentioned above, out of which the French sociologists would have us believe the religious ideas of mankind have been born.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, there is evidence in abundance that the most "numinous" moments, as Otto would say, are those experienced by the individual not as a member of the group but when he has withdrawn in solitude and silence to make a "private retreat" in the bush at the time of his initiation. Then it is, as the savage believes, that the spirit of some ancestor or departed relative manifests himself to him in a dream, or under the guise of an animal, as his special protector or tutelary divinity. Such a manifestation is quite independent of "the individualized forms of collective forces" and group "effervescence during periods of concentration," and it is only one example of many similar solitary experiences.

It is doubtless true that in every community, primitive and civilized, the number of deeply religious people capable of first-hand spiritual experience independent of social suggestion and traditional practice, is relatively small. In the case of the majority it is usually only at critical junctures in their private or public life that religious emotions

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 218 f.

are aroused to an appreciable extent. Nevertheless, everywhere and at all times it seems there are those to whom religion in its loftier and more individualistic aspects makes a ready appeal and finds expression in higher evaluations of the concept of Deity, conditioned of course by the capacity for abstract thought attainable in a given cultural level. Hence the occurrence of seers, shamans and prophets as a universal phenomenon in the history of religion. Since in many instances these outstanding personalities have been responsible for far-reaching changes alike in the course of religious and social development, it is difficult to reconcile their irruptive action in the last analysis with the reduction of religion to a social sanction.

*god*  
Monotheism as a Social Sanction

Thus, for example, in Egypt when Amenhotep IV succeeded to the throne in 1375 B.C. as the devotee of the Aton (an ancient name for the Sun-god and associated particularly with the disc from which he shone upon the world) a struggle ensued at once between the royal house and the priesthood of Amon, the Theban god equated with Re as the supreme deity of Egypt in the New Kingdom. The solar theology of this priesthood was nominal, and hitherto Amon-Re had been unchallenged as the State-god *par excellence*. The new Pharaoh,

however, promptly set to work to eliminate the entire pantheon, leaving the solar Aton exclusively in possession throughout the Empire.

In his attempt to establish a genuine monotheism, the new king was as thorough and drastic as Somerset or Cromwell in later ages. For the remaining eleven years of his reign he devoted himself to the sacred cause he had espoused, and with the able assistance of his wife, Nefertiti, he brought into being a new religion, despite the opposition of the Amon priesthood and the established social sanctions. True, it proved to be but a short-lived interlude in a polytheistic tradition because it was in advance of its time. At the death of Akhnaton ("Profitable to Aton"), as Amenhotep IV styled himself, his successor Tutankhamon returned to the allegiance of Amon-Re, but the monotheistic movement while it lasted was certainly not a product of social forces and emotions. It rested upon a genuine spiritual experience and an individual conviction carried into effect against powerful organized opposition in the community.

The circumstances in which the parallel movement in Iran began under the inspiration of Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster as his name is rendered in the Latin variant, are obscure. Nevertheless, this notable achievement was the work of a dominant personality capable of transforming Vedic

polytheism into an ethical dualism independent of the current social tradition. Or, again, there is the Hebrew genius Moses who succeeded in consolidating the scattered desert tribes into a nation as the result of his theophany in Midian. Doubtless Yahweh, or Jehovah as the God of Sinai is incorrectly designated in the Old Testament Scriptures, was not entirely unknown to the ancestors of Israel before He was brought into prominence by Moses, since divine names such as *Ya*, *Yo*, *Yau*, *Yah*, occur in Semitic cuneiform tablets and ancient inscriptions. But it remained for Moses to give Him His place and significance in Israel as a result of the revelations he claimed to have received at the Burning Bush and on the Holy Mount.

It was not until many centuries later that Israel came to a knowledge of the one, transcendent, universal, ethical God of all the earth, and guide of historical events, in accordance with His eternal purposes. But this achievement at the end of the Exile in the sixth century B.C. and onwards, was the work of a long succession of deeply religious men and women from the days of Moses to the time of the Prophetic movement. Always they were a small minority in the community, often persecuted and regarded as rebels, but by virtue of their spiritual experience they were able to foster a monotheistic tradition which eventually prevailed in the nation as a whole.

This is the more remarkable inasmuch as the conquest of Palestine introduced a serious problem for those determined to maintain the desert religion in a new environment, largely agricultural in character. Normally in ancient society a change of territory meant a change of gods, as in the case of Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth i.16), and Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings v.17). But notwithstanding the persistent backsliding of the people, and their repeated recourse to the local vegetation cultus of Palestine, the worship of Yahweh was never extinguished, however dimly the flame may have burnt at times.

This was accomplished by isolated individuals in opposition to the current social sanctions, for in the light of recent evidence it now appears that before the Exile the religion of Yahweh was much more syncretistic than was formerly supposed. Thus, the temples to Astarte and Yahweh erected side by side on the Israelite wall at Mizpah in the ninth century B.C. show that the two cults existed simultaneously, while the Aramaic papyri discovered in 1907 and 1908 at Yeb, or Elephantine, reveal that in the fifth century female consorts were assigned to Yahweh in this Jewish military colony in Upper Egypt, giving point to the denunciations of Jeremiah in the previous century. Therefore, it would seem he was not very far wrong when he declared that in

Israel in his day there were as many gods as there were cities (Jer. ii. 28 ; xi. 13).

*The Function of the Seer and the Prophet*

Moreover, the methods adopted in the Yahweh cult were indistinguishable from those which obtained elsewhere. Thus, prior to the classical epoch of Hebrew prophecy in the period immediately preceding the Exile, inspiration and the means adopted to ascertain the divine will were those commonly employed in divination, Shamanism and the mystery cults. This is apparent from the Biblical accounts of the groups of ecstatic mystics, called the *Nebi'im*, or "sons of the prophets," connected with particular sanctuaries such as Gibeah, Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal and Jericho, who worked themselves into a frenzy by the aid of the timbrel, pipe, harp and psaltery, like the Dionysian votaries in Thrace, in order to attain unity with the deity (cf. 1 Sam. x. 5 ff.). In this condition of divine intoxication a spokesman of the company would utter a prophetic oracle (1 Kings xxii. 11 f. ; 1 Sam. x. 10), and so contagious was the ecstasy that it rapidly spread among the onlookers (cf. 1 Sam. xix. 20-24). While under the influence of the inspiring power the seer's own personality was in abeyance so that he became "another man," or god-possessed (1 Sam. x. 6), and therefore the

médium of divine communication. It was, however, in the first instance essentially an individual experience rather than a product of social sanctions.

Psychologically the phenomenon presupposes a passionate nature, a keen spiritual insight and a psychic disposition on the part of the ecstatic. Often it was coupled with divination and sooth-saying since the purpose of inspiration was to foretell future events, or ascertain the judgment of heaven on a particular course of action. Thus, the *kôšēm* (diviner) or Hebrew *rô'eb* (*hôzēb*) was the professional seer, "seeing" in a state of trance or ecstasy brought about by one means or another, in which he spoke words of divination (oracles) concerning the future. Sometimes it was produced, as we have seen, by music and dance, or it might be induced by gazing upon some occult object such as a mirror or "breastplate" of twelve stones identified by Rabbinical writers with the mysterious instrument known as the *Urim* and *Thummim* within the ephod (cf. Hos. iii. 4; 1 Sam. xxx. 7 ff.; xxiii. 9 ff.; Ex. xxviii. 30, cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 41 ff. (LXX)). Balaam after performing certain magical operations fell into a trance in the hope of being able to put a curse upon the Hebrew tribes (Num. xxiv. 4 f.), while Elijah "put his face between his knees" on Carmel to produce rain by occult means (1 Kings xviii. 42).

The later prophetic movement introduced a

different method of making known the will and purpose of God by employing the agency of inspired human speech in the place of ecstasy, trance and oracular divination. But it was equally individualistic. As Edouard Meyer says, "the step forward which Amos, Hosea and Isaiah took denotes one of the most momentous changes in the history of mankind. The all-subduing force of conscience, or, more exactly, of the conscience of a single individual in opposition to the whole surrounding world, came into action and made itself felt for the first time. The consequences of the struggle fought out in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. within the small area of Palestine are still felt throughout the whole range of civilization."<sup>1</sup>

This remarkable ethical movement was initiated by uneducated men distinguished from the rest of their fellow countrymen only by their own religious experience and spiritual perceptions. They felt themselves to be the mouthpieces of a revelation differing in kind from that given by the "sons of the prophets," or by Urim and Ephod. They were visionaries, it is true, and like their predecessors they believed themselves to be "full of God," speaking that they did know and testifying that they had heard and seen. It was the character of

<sup>1</sup> *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte theorie und zur wirtschaftlichen und politischen Geschichte des Altertums* (Halle, Niemeyer, 1910), p. 213.



the message rather than the manner of its reception, or its individuality, that constituted the new departure. The words of each of these spiritual giants were stamped with genuine originality and opposition to contemporary thought to a greater degree than in any previous period. They were conscious of the contrast between their own feelings and ideas and the purpose of God Who constrained them to give verbal utterance, often made explicit by symbolic action, to His divine decrees, regardless of the consequences to themselves.

Invariably their message had social implications. By their words and deeds they interpreted in terms of an overruling Providence the events that were taking place around them in their own land and the surrounding nations, however repellent the verdict might be to their hearers. To announce the approaching doom of Israel and Judah, regarded as a Chosen People of God, was a severe test of their own faith as well as that of those to whom the message was addressed. Such a reversal of all preconceived ideas and religious sanctions could be accepted and proclaimed only by men of intense personal conviction giving utterance to what they believed to be a word of God forcing itself to find expression through them, whether the people will hear or whether they will forbear. Moreover, they were not without their rivals in the field of pro-

phesy. As in an earlier period Micaiah is said to have been confronted with four hundred "prophets of Yahweh" when he was called upon to prejudge the results of the battle of Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii. 12 ff.), so Jeremiah withstood Hananiah and his followers when the latter failed to recognize the hand of God in the Babylonian invasion (Jer. xxviii. 5 ff). It was not until after the Exile, when the prophetic movement having done its work came to an end, that those who had accurately interpreted the purpose of God for the nation were vindicated. Then it was that the restored community re-established itself as a social unit on the basis of the revelation vouchsafed in solitude to these outstanding isolated personalities, rebels though they had been in their own day and generation.

Throughout the chequered career of this peculiar human group the feeling of dependence on Providence was always latent, since on no other hypothesis can be explained the persistence of the Yahweh religion from the days of the wanderings in the desert when all the circumstances were against its survival. The pre-exilic ethical prophets from Amos onwards never regarded themselves as the originators of a new religion. On the contrary, they looked back to the fathers of Israel as their prototypes, and represented themselves as reformers

restoring the people to the heights from which they had fallen. However obscure the early stages of Hebrew history may be, few would deny that the foundations of the social and religious traditions were laid by Moses, or that the idea of a divine covenant consolidated the tribes into a nation on the basis of a powerful religious sanction. If this much be granted, that the community was organized on theocratic lines is a reasonable conclusion since it was the covenant idea which persisted as the basic principle underlying the institutions as a whole, as they are known to us through the Old Testament Scriptures.

It was clearly the belief of the various individuals and schools responsible for the production of the literature in its present form, and as it has existed in process of compilation at least since the ninth and tenth centuries B.C., that the God of Israel regarded the nation as His special preserve so that the course of human events was ordered in relation to His providential care. It was this conviction that found expression in the prophetic conception of revelation through historical occurrences which eventually reached its climax in Christianity. By special miraculous interventions, it was thought, Yahweh accomplished His purposes, making winds His messengers and flames of fire His ministers (Ps. civ.). The forces of nature were in His hands

and subservient to His designs for His own people, sometimes to aid them, or, when they disobeyed His commands, to punish and frustrate.

This primitive notion of a tribal All-Father, or High God, gradually gave place under prophetic influence to a loftier and less circumscribed conception of the universal rule and jurisdiction of the one God Who is the ground of the universe, as was so magnificently argued by the Deutero-Isaiah in the closing years of the Exile. But in Judaism Israel never ceased to be regarded as the special object of the providential care of the All-sovereign Deity Who moulds all things as a potter shapes his clay. Out of evil comes good, and for the ethical monotheist the righteous will of Yahweh was working towards beneficent ends. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but Yahweh directeth his steps" (Prov. xvi. 9). Despite adversity and all appearances to the contrary, trust in the over-ruling goodness of God must ultimately prevail. "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden my right hand. Thou dost lead me according to thy decree, and afterwards thou dost receive me with honour" (Ps. lxxiii. 23 f.). Only in the book of Ecclesiastes is a discordant note sounded which breaks into the harmony of this conviction. However difficult it may be to vindicate the providential ordering of human affairs in its individual applica-

tion within the horizons of this earthly life, inasmuch as the wicked seem to flourish like a green bay tree while the innocent suffer, in the longer view of history judgment falls on nations and societies according to their deeds. So the conviction grew that sooner or later a "Day of the Lord" must come and then the righteous rule of Yahweh will be established.

### *The Apocalyptic Conception of Providence*

This contention, familiar in the writings of the great prophets, became the dominant theme of the apocalyptic literature in the centuries immediately preceding and succeeding the Christian era. According to this school evil would be overwhelmed by a dramatic divine intervention, very much as in Zoroastrian tradition in Persia the whole creation was thought to be moving towards a "renovation of the world" at the "consummation" when "Right shall smite the Lie."<sup>1</sup> Ahura Mazda (Ormazd), the beneficent Creator, having prevailed over the powers of evil (Ahriman), the wicked would be consumed at the General Judgment, and a renovated world would emerge. Against the final account the good works of the "men of the Right" (Ashawan) were faithfully recorded day by day. Then "they that get a good name shall be partakers

<sup>1</sup> Yasna xliii. 12; xlviii. 1.

in the promised reward in the fair abode of Good Thought of Mazda, and of Right.”<sup>1</sup>

Zoroaster seems to have been the first to maintain that the final consummation was ultimately based on a right choice in the earthly struggle. The Jews never reached a position where the destiny of the individual was independent of the fate of the nation as a whole. Therefore, in Judaism, while the doctrine of ethical monotheism eventually gave rise to an individual relationship with Yahweh which transcended death, carrying with it the hope of personal immortality, it was a collective restoration of the nation as a Chosen People that constituted the main theme in the Jewish apocalyptic literature. The divine covenant ratified at Sinai must sooner or later find its completion in the sovereign rule of God in a kingdom of moral order—if not in the present world, then in the “age to come.”

In Christianity this conception of an overruling Providence working out the divine purpose in a new Israel inheriting the promises made to the old dispensation, occupied a central position. At first, it would seem, the setting up of the rule of God was expected within the existing generation, and with the consummation, both corporate and personal salvation would be secured (St. Matt. xvi. 28; xxiv. 34). The relationship between God and man

<sup>1</sup> Yasna xxx. 10.

established under existing conditions of time and space would find its fulfilment in the transcendent order, but not as a future hope bracing man to endure hardship in this life looking for the recompense of the reward in the hereafter. Eternal life, viewed from the Christian standpoint, is an integral element in the doctrine of Providence, and can be rightly understood only within this context. It is a condition attained here and now as a result of the union of the soul with a living God in a corporate society which cannot be severed by the dissolution of the physical organism. It is an inevitable consequence of membership of the Kingdom which itself belongs to the eternal world. "Our citizenship is in heaven" was, and is, the Christian status (Phil. iii. 20; Heb. xiii. 14).

The Incarnation, according to Christian theology, brought into being a new humanity, both individual and corporate, grounded in the providential care and redeeming love of God and thereby raised to a higher spiritual order in this life by being made a partaker of redemptive grace. As the Jewish idea of an immediate divine catastrophic intervention gradually fell into the background, or, as in the Johannine Apocalypse, was transformed into a millennial hope of the distant future, the *parousia* became the presence of Christ in the believer as perceived by the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Already St. Paul had made the Jewish eschatological reign of God a present reality rather than a future event by equating the life of the spirit with the life of the age to come. As he had himself become a new man on the Damascus road, so those who had been buried with Christ in a symbolic "baptism into his death" were "raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 3 f.). Henceforth the conditions under which they lived differed fundamentally from those which constituted their former existence inasmuch as they had been freed from the law of sin and death and animated by a new life-principle enabling them to walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (Rom. viii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 17). Consequently, when the expectation of an immediate return of Christ was abandoned, with its "interim ethic," the first business of the Church was recognized to be the making of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. In other words, the spiritualization of society by active missionary enterprise that all mankind might be incorporated in the new humanity. Only when this was accomplished would the divine purpose be fulfilled. Hence the struggle for supremacy in the declining Roman Empire which characterized the history of Christianity in the opening centuries of our era.



*Divine Providence*

The divine ordering of the universe and of human affairs had long exercised the minds of thinkers in the Græco-Roman world when Christianity was launched into it. Plato had argued against the suggestion that God Who is at once supremely wise and both willing and able to provide, makes no provision for the small matters. But while he contended that He Who provides for the world has disposed all things with a view to the preservation and perfection of the whole,<sup>1</sup> it was not the personal care of a personal God, as the Hebrews conceived divine Providence. The Deity of Greek philosophical speculation was the self-sufficient, eternal, uncaused Being existing as Aristotle would say as "pure form," for ever separated from material and mutable things. He moved the world from without, but He was not the Source and Sustainer of ethical values determining the course of historical events in accordance with His righteous will. There was no reciprocity between Creator and creation, and in getting behind a source of motion to an Unmoved Mover, Aristotle arrived at a God Who was immanent within Himself. Such a Being, in fact, unlike the God of Plato, was neither a Creator nor a Providence, in any real sense.

<sup>1</sup> *Laws*, x. 903.

The Stoics, on the other hand, resolved God and the universe into a monism, or single substance, which they identified with Providence, but in the process they robbed the concept of its theistic implications. On this view creation and Creator were so mingled in an impersonal unity that the "All is One" and the "One is All." In other words, God and nature were one with a causal nexus running through the entire process, which became at once Destiny and Providence. In practice this was little more than the popular notion of "fate" in a philosophic dressing. Thus, the Stoic dictum "to live according to nature" merely meant, in the words of Chrysippus, "to live according to scientific knowledge of the phenomena of nature, doing nothing which the Universal Law forbids, which is the Right Reason which pervades all things, and is the same as Zeus, the Lord of the ordering of this world." Like the Hebrew prophets, the Stoics recognized a teleological purpose working towards beneficent ends, but it was ethical pantheism rather than ethical monotheism that lay behind their moral elevation and uncompromising idealism.

The Epicureans cared for none of these things. While they did not deny the existence of the gods, they regarded them as beings dwelling in the inter-spaces between the worlds wholly indifferent to human interests and affairs. Since they were quite

incapable of intervening in the natural order, or of meting out rewards and punishments after death in the absence of an immortal soul in man, to approach them with requests was futile, though it was thought they should be treated with reverence as eternal and blessed. In such a theology the idea of divine Providence could have no place.

The Platonic revival under the inspiring influence of Plotinus (A.D. 204-270), the founder of Neoplatonism, restored a teleological conception of the universe, but in making the Supreme Reality beyond knowledge and existence, revealed only in mystical experience, little room was left for a providential ordering of the lower world of becoming and decay, contrasted sharply with the region of eternal and immutable Being. Nevertheless, through Origen and the Alexandrian school, it was not without its influence on Christian thought and practice. The earlier works of St. Augustine are "steeped in Plotinus," as Dr. Inge remarks, Christian and Neoplatonic ideas being brought into conjunction in an endeavour to rest the Faith on rational philosophical foundations.

In St. Augustine, however, many streams of thought and speculation met. In his youth he had been taught Christianity, later he became in turn a Manichæan, a sceptic, and a Neo-platonist, till finally he returned to the Faith of his pious mother

in the summer of A.D. 386. While his mind was never wholly free of oriental elements, he was essentially a Latin, and he was largely responsible for determining the direction of subsequent Western theology. Pagan Rome he regarded as having been built on a false philosophy, and its destruction appeared to him as a vindication of the working out in history of the predetermined counsels of God. Over against the "earthly city" he set the *Civitas Dei*, or kingdom of God, the pattern of which was laid up in heaven, though like the "age to come" for St. Paul, it is a present reality as well as a future hope. The spiritual order, as he conceived it, is a dynamic force manifesting itself in human society and bringing into being the new humanity actuated by the Divine Spirit, manifest in the world outwardly through the Church and inwardly in the soul of man by the operation of sanctifying grace. The Church is thus a divine *civitas* and *congregatio sanctorum*, the Christian counterpart of Plato's Republic, in opposition to the "city of man," in which he saw a picture of himself before his conversion. But though he accepted the Neoplatonic distinction between spirit and matter, and embraced its ardour for union with the divine, he never regarded matter or the world as so inherently evil that it was outside the scheme of divine Providence.

From Plotinus Augustine had learnt to equate

evil with a defect in that which is fundamentally good, but having substituted the Jewish idea of creative will for the Neo-platonic theory of the emanation of all things from the Supreme Reality, he sought the cause of evil in the heart of man, and in higher intelligences, frustrating the divine purpose for the human race consequent upon the Fall of Adam. But while the human will is the instrument employed by God to work out His redemptive purposes in this world, the power to will the good was lost by the initial tragedy through the "seminal identity" of the race with its original progenitor. To overcome this inherent moral weakness, omnipotent divine grace, he argued, alone sufficed. Hence his doctrine of redemption, and the subsequent ascetic tradition which characterized Western Christendom in the Dark Ages, and became the only constructive social dynamic till a new civilization slowly emerged in the early Middle Ages.

As against the Pelagian heresy that man can work out his own salvation if he will, Augustinianism, whatever may have been its theological defects, proclaimed the gospel of human insufficiency apart from divine aid; a conception inherent in the doctrine of Providence at all times and in every mode of expression. In the Christian view, man is not master of his own fate. He is a created being dependent upon his Creator. His true nature as man is based on his

relation to God as the overruling Providence Who by His own act and initiative has created a new order of humanity through the Incarnation. Thus regarded, God is the chief actor in every human situation, and the end of human existence is fellowship with Him in a redeemed community.

[The alternative Humanistic theory of progressive achievement and optimistic humanitarianism, which makes man the measure of all things, inevitably in the end, as will be shown, substitutes the superstate for a spiritual society, manifest equally in the Marxian materialistic interpretation of history behind Russian Communism, and in Nietzsche's "will to power" in a struggle for existence which brings "supermen" to the top: the prototype of the modern Nazi movement in Germany. From the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery the Western world has been engaged in a vast historical experiment with a view to gaining the mastery over the processes of nature and the fortunes of human life. In this gigantic effort the spiritual factors have been largely overlooked, with disastrous results. Instead of becoming master of the world, man is now in danger of becoming the victim of his own achievements, and the plaything of the forces he has brought into being but failed to control. The time is ripe, therefore, for an inquiry into the integrative function and consolidating force of the spiritual

tradition in our culture inherent in the belief in Providence. It is to these problems that we must now turn.

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## CHAPTER II

### MYTH AND REVELATION

Faith in an order of divine Providence inevitably gives rise to the idea of revelation as a concrete event by means of which the will and purposes of the supernatural being or beings responsible for the creation and right government of the world are made known to man. Around these basic assumptions a body of sacred tradition collects in the form of myths which find expression in a prescribed cultus having divine authority by virtue of its revelational origin. We have now to examine the sociological significance of these concepts and religious activities.

Starting with the existence of a beneficent supra-mundane source of strength and protection in the right ordering of private and public life, the technique adopted to preserve and promote correct relations between the natural and spiritual worlds requires some re-enforcement in intelligible terms. Therefore, around certain facts connected with practical problems a sacred tradition tends to collect which is evaluated as revealed knowledge and gives an historical content to established beliefs and customs. The quest of truth for truth's sake is a much

later venture launched first among the Greeks in the middle of the first millennium B.C., when serious attempts were made to explain the origin and structure of the universe in terms of ultimate realities by reducing all things to a single principle. Even Pindar, the greatest of the lyric poets of these centuries, still thinking traditionally, declared that by "no manner of means shall a man search with his human mind into the thought of the gods," who are a race of superior beings though of like passions with men. But with Plato a new realm of eternal ideas is entered wherein the truly real is encountered by "those who are able to grasp the eternal and the immutable."<sup>1</sup>

This philosophical quest of ultimate concepts and the essential nature of God, man and the universe represents a product of the intense intellectual life of Athens, though the new movement actually arose in Ionia and flourished in other parts of Greece before it reached the capital. But philosophical reasoning in either the ancient or the modern world is a highly specialized quality, and while from the sixth century B.C. it has attracted men of intellectual distinction in many departments of life, it was and is completely unknown in primitive society. In any community, in fact, the attention of the majority is concentrated mainly upon the practical issues of

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, vi. 484.

everyday life and experience, and so far as the spiritual order is concerned, thought and practice turn upon the divine control of human events and natural processes rather than on abstract speculations about origins or forms of being.

### *The Function of Myth*

Since the quest of life is man's chief preoccupation where the means of subsistence are none too secure, a cultus readily develops around the practical issues. To give efficacy to the actions performed in the supernatural control of the food supply and the affairs of daily life, a sacred narrative develops in order to refer back the things done to an original supernatural source still operative in the world. Thus, creation stories are of universal occurrence not because of any innate inquisitiveness on the part of the human mind concerning the way in which the natural order came into being, as has been often supposed,<sup>1</sup> or as a result of abstract philosophizings about the ultimate grounds of the universe. Rather are they the means whereby the drama of creation is repeated in the form of a myth as a reality lived and experienced in the present.

In genuine myth, which should not be confused with fiction or fairy tales, symbolism plays little or no part. As Professor Malinowski says, "myth is

<sup>1</sup> Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (London, 1899), vol. I, p. 162.

to the savage what to a fully believing Christian is the Biblical story of creation, of the fall of man, and of the redemption by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross." It is not "an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements."<sup>1</sup> In short, it is the record of a divine revelation, and as such it "expresses, enhances and codifies accepted beliefs, vouches for the efficacy of ritual and gives a supernatural sanction for ethical principles of conduct, just as the Biblical creation narratives live on in our ritual and in our morality, govern our faith and control our conduct."

By the repetition of the events which are supposed to have happened in primeval times by the will of the gods, supernatural influences are brought to bear on the recurrent situation as it exists at the moment in a given community. It is out of the concrete realities of the present interpreted as primeval revelations that mythology arises and by investing established custom and belief with divine revelational authority, consolidates and stabilizes society. Thus, in almost every primitive tribe the esoteric tradition is maintained and handed on from one generation to the next by means of initiation ceremonies.

<sup>1</sup> *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (London, 1926), pp. 21 ff.

These rites are held at the attainment of adolescence when the full privileges and responsibilities of manhood and tribal government are assumed by the male section of the population. The proceedings are strictly secret and in the course of the protracted period of isolation detailed instruction is given in tribal lore and custom, religious practice and correct social behaviour, inculcated by the aid of corporate suggestion and sacred association. The climax is reached when the initiates are incorporated into the mystical fellowship of the adult tribe by a ritual death and rebirth which not only gives them a new status in society but also brings them into a sacramental relationship with the ancestral spirits and the god or totem who presides over the mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, a primitive community is a human group in which all the members on reaching manhood are bound together by spiritual bonds centring in a common esoteric tradition made explicit at initiation in a manner calculated to preserve intact the social structure. The sacred lore is not a fanciful tale told in explanation of natural phenomena, nor rudimentary philosophical speculation, but a method of expressing certain ways of thinking and feeling about the facts of life, and of regulating human

<sup>1</sup> The social significance of initiation will be further considered later in connexion with the structure of the community ; cf. pp. 200 f.

actions. Things are as they are because the powers that be have so decreed in a primeval revelation, and tribal behaviour is prescribed accordingly, both in relation to Providence and to the society of which each individual is an integral part. The function of religion in general and of myth in particular, is to provide supernatural sanctions to stabilize the existing order by endowing the accepted traditions with sacredness interpreted in terms of a primeval revelation. By referring them back to a higher reality of initial events, custom and belief are invested with a significance which gives them permanent value.

The struggle for existence demands co-ordination of purpose and activities, and the sanctions of religion supply the consolidating force. Conditions of life in primitive society make adherence to explicit faith in tradition essential to the continuance of the group, but this inevitably tends to produce a static order. "It was so in the beginning" *ex hypothesi* is a final transcendent reference. Nevertheless, by its appeal to the supernatural as an ever-present intervening creative agent, religion has devised a technique for dealing with the unpredictable elements in everyday experience which has constantly introduced a new vision of reality, and so far from being an "opiate of the people," in actual fact it has constantly been bringing forth out of its treasure things new and old. By the aid of a divine revela-

tion the innovator has broken through the reign of custom and introduced not only new ideas and ways of life, but sometimes, as in the case of Moses, virtually a new civilization destined to have a far-reaching influence on the subsequent course of world events. Once established, the function of myth is to stabilize the existing order by again endowing it with sacredness, and this usually involves a re-interpretation of the traditional beliefs and customs.

Thus every age and cultural horizon tend to produce their own mythologies and revelations according to changing circumstances, and while each body of tradition in its turn serves its purposes as a spiritual dynamic and consolidating force, the problem confronting the theologian and philosopher is that of evaluating its content in terms of truth and reality. Sacred lore and its associated ritual may serve a useful purpose in society without necessarily being capable of vindication at the bar of history, reason and spiritual experience. But some such guarantee of veracity would seem to be essential if the foundations of the social order are to be securely laid on a religious basis. It behoves us, therefore, to examine in greater detail the nature of the alleged revelations in their mythological setting.

*The Idea of Revelation*

While the conception of revelation is inherent in the idea of a providential ordering of the course of history by a personal God Who can be known, and in Whom the universe is grounded, it does not follow that a complete scheme of ready-made theology was revealed at the threshold of the human race and passed on to succeeding generations in varying degrees of completeness or imperfection. It was this belief that gave rise to the sharp distinction between "Natural" and "Revealed" Religion, characteristic of the thought of the last two centuries, when the beliefs and practices of mankind arrived at by inferences and processes of reasoning without supernatural aid were placed in one category as Natural Religion, and the doctrines disclosed to Israel and the Christian Church in another as Revealed Religion. This antithesis was derived from the scholastic contention that while reason could arrive at the notion of God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, revelation was required to come to a knowledge of such mysteries as the Incarnation and the Trinity.

Prior to the comparative study of religion by a genuinely scientific method, it was not difficult to maintain such a theory as this. But once the veil was lifted from the rival faiths which have claimed



and still claim the allegiance of large groups of mankind in other lands, the remarkable uniformity of belief and custom was not easy to explain on any hypothesis that placed Judaism and Christianity in a water-tight compartment with a particular label, quite distinct from any other system. An ingenious attempt, however, has been made recently to preserve the idea of a primeval monotheistic revelation before degradation set in as a result of the Fall. This hypothesis is based on the ethnological analysis of "culture-horizons" (*kultur-kreise*) carried out by Friederich Ratzel (1886) and his pupil, Frobenius (1895). In this way an "archaic" substratum of society is determined, and in this alleged "primeval horizon," represented by the simplest peoples—the Pygmies, Bushmen, Andamanese, Fuegians, Semang and the native tribes of South-east Australia—Fr. Schmidt finds the remains of an original monotheism, in the form of a belief in Supreme Beings.<sup>1</sup> This, he contends, constitutes the relics of a primeval revelation.

Now it is unquestionably true, as Andrew Lang demonstrated in 1898,<sup>2</sup> that remote, ethical, beneficent High Gods occur all over the world among people in a very primitive state of culture. These are distinct from the lesser spirits, totems and divine

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion* (London, 1931); *Die Ursprung der Gottesidee* (Munster, 1912-36).

<sup>2</sup> *The Making of Religion* (London, 1898).

ancestors and have every appearance of representing a loftier conception of Deity. Sometimes they are said to have made themselves as well as the earth and its inhabitants. In matters of custom and belief they are the ultimate authority, and preside over the tribal mysteries. It was they who gave society its laws and culture, but having retired to their heavenly abode in the sky, they are now remote and no longer interested in human affairs. Therefore they are seldom the recipients of prayers and sacrifices, though their association with the sacred bull-roarer and rain-making gives them a place in initiation and other ceremonies.

If gods with these qualities and attributes cannot be explained as deified rulers, or ghosts carried to the highest power, neither can they be interpreted in terms of a primeval monotheistic revelation comparable to that which in later times the Jews claimed to have received through their prophets, ancestors and seers. Thus, to affirm that an All-Father existed before the advent of death, does not presuppose a realization of time which admits of eternity as a corollary, any more than to assert that He is able "to go anywhere and do anything" is suggestive of omnipotence. For the primitive mind time, eternity and causation are meaningless concepts in their philosophical aspects. The attribute of "deathlessness" is distinct from that of

eternity as the negation of time—a *Nunc Stans* without duration or successiveness, as postulated by the Scholastic theologians. Similarly, causation has little or no meaning beyond the powers exercised by medicine-men and rain-makers. Therefore, to say that the primitive ideas which find expression in High Gods “arose from the profoundest depths of a conviction of the person of the Supreme Being as universal cause,”<sup>1</sup> is to attribute to the “archaic culture” metaphysical notions as far removed from their powers of reasoning as the Scholastic concept of creation *ex nihilo*, which is also assigned to this hypothetical substratum of society.

But even supposing these philosophical interpretations of Deity could be shown to prevail among Pygmies, Andamanese, Fuegians and Australians, we are no nearer a demonstration of a primeval revelation of a First Cause with theological attributes, inasmuch as the latest conclusions of ethnologists certainly do not lend any support to the contention that these races represent “dawn man.” On the contrary, it now appears that the Pygmies, for example, are merely dwarf varieties of *Homo sapiens* resembling in all essential particulars the tall types, but reduced in stature by their biological and environmental conditions. Consequently, it cannot be maintained that they are older than the

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 150.

tall peoples of the same ethnological group. We do not know, and have no means of ascertaining, what *primeval* man thought and believed about anything. Therefore, it is merely a waste of time and energy to speculate on the subject.

Nevertheless, it does appear to be a fact that the development of religion has not proceeded by a process of gradual evolution along unilateral lines, as was formerly supposed. The presence of High Gods among low races has at least shown that the sequence from animism through polytheism to monotheism can hardly be maintained, if existing cultures throw any light at all on earlier modes of thought. But equally impossible is it to reverse the order, as Fr. Schmidt would urge, making simple belief in an ethical Supreme Being the starting-point when, at the threshold of the religious experience of the race, the Creator revealed Himself and spoke directly to man before the process of degeneration had begun as a result of primeval guilt bringing with it the complex medley of magico-religious superstitions ever since current in primitive society. Andrew Lang, it is true, maintained that animism (which he interpreted as the worship of spirits) was a degenerate form of the earlier worship of a Being "about whose metaphysical nature—spirit or not spirit—no questions were asked."<sup>1</sup> Similarly,

<sup>1</sup> *Making of Religion*, p. 264.

Pfleiderer thought that when society broke up into separate individual wills, the belief in God also broke up into superstitious belief in individual spirits.<sup>1</sup> But this depends on what is meant by "God."

An evaluation of the sacred in terms of the transcendent and providential, we have seen, is of universal occurrence independent of particular personalized conceptions, such as those of spirits, ghosts, deified heroes and ancestors. These ideas reasonably may be regarded as later aspects of beliefs and apprehensions which in their original forms were less clearly defined. No one would expect to find an Olympus in a pre-palæolithic Eden, wherever such a cradle-land be sought, and whatever conditions may be thought to have prevailed in it. But it does not follow that the Olympian gods are thereby necessarily a product of a decadent civilization. On the contrary, animism and polytheism have been characteristic features of some of the most progressive cultures in the ancient world—e.g. of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, Rome and Vedic India. Thus, the Olympian theology was found to be not wholly incompatible with higher Hellenic thought. On the other hand, the millions who have adopted as their battle cry "there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his pro-

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Religion*, vol. III, p. 42.

phet," have not been distinguished always by their spiritual, ethical and cultural achievements.

Moreover, where the idea of an All-Father prevailed in primitive society there is no evidence that the belief has ever been an active element in the life and conduct of the community. Usually the High God is too remote to be much more than a name, and occasionally, as in Central Australia, little more than a boggy to enforce discipline among the women and children. The supernatural agents who really count in the regulation and government of society are the more intimate totems, spirits and ancestors. In short, the conception of a Supreme Being is a collateral development in primitive culture which plays a very minor rôle in the lives of the majority. Thus, even in Israel, though at length monotheism prevailed, the religious leaders before and during the Exile found it wellnigh impossible, as we have seen, to wean the people from the allurements of the polytheistic and animistic shrines of Palestine and Babylonia, so long as the rival cultus remained in their midst.

Instead of postulating the All-Father belief as a relic of a primitive revelation, the widespread existence of a monotheistic tendency recurrent at different cultural levels is more readily explained as the functioning of a particular type of religious experience. The High God is aptly so called because

he stands alone head and shoulders above all the secondary figures—animistic spirits, totems, ghosts of the dead and so on. It is, in fact, his very superiority that makes him unapproachable and remote, and renders him liable to drop out of the picture altogether, or to pass into obscurity in the background. Therefore, he represents the apprehension of Deity in the highest sense in which the human mind is capable of conceiving it in any given phase of its development. Unlike the philosophical concept of Ultimate Reality, this notion of Supreme Being seems to have risen spontaneously, as Dr. Radin says,<sup>1</sup> as “a purposive functioning of an inherent type of thought and emotion” rather than as a result of an elaborate search for a unifying principle as the ground of the universe. Indeed, when man first began to speculate about cause and effect in the natural order, he was led to animistic and polytheistic explanations. Thus, the monotheistic tendency is really more fundamental than any product of an evolutionary system or philosophical quest, since it is an apprehension of the divine in the highest terms in which it can be conceived by the religious consciousness, independent of intellectual interpolations and theorisings.

As the concept of Deity in the last analysis, and in its most ultimate and loftiest form, is the outcome

<sup>1</sup> *Monotheism among Primitive Peoples* (London, 1924), p. 67.

of religious experience, and is fashioned from the data thereby provided, so it is not philosophical doctrines concerning divine attributes, still less systems of theology, that are revealed at any time or place. If revelation has been given to man at all, it must have been vouchsafed to human personalities and made known through the movements of history initiated and directed to specific ends. All knowledge rests on experience and if, as is postulated by all transcendentalistic theists, God is incomprehensible but capable of being known by human personalities, the interpretation of experience in conceptual terms is always subject to the limitations of the recipient. This is inevitable in a world in evolution, otherwise "general ideas" summed up in theologies as final revelations would become static and inadequate to the needs of future generations.

This static obscurantist attitude of mind is precisely the danger to which "revealed religion" is always liable. It was so in the beginning by the irrefutable will and decree of the gods, or their equivalent, therefore it must so remain for ever, is the "fundamentalist" attitude of mind in all ages. But this has not been the method of divine self-disclosure either in the past or in the present. In sundry times and divers manners the truth which God in His infinite wisdom desires to make known



to man has been imparted to intelligent beings able to receive and make use of it, according to their capacity, not in the form of doctrinal formularies but through the medium of human personality. In the process various avenues of approach have been and are adopted, as, for example, natural phenomena, reason, conscience and particularly the words and actions of inspired men.

As has been demonstrated, throughout the course of human history great personalities, endowed with peculiar gifts of leadership and spiritual insight, have been responsible for changing the outlook of their contemporaries and of initiating movements calculated to have far-reaching influence on subsequent events. Such outstanding individuals may reasonably be said to have been the recipients of special divine revelations in so far as they have made known ideas about God which, in the light of the fuller spiritual knowledge and ethical evaluations of later ages, can be judged as nobler, higher and purer than had hitherto been conceived ; in short, a more complete disclosure of Ultimate Reality. But if there are degrees of insight resulting in an advance in spiritual ideas, and a deeper understanding of the mind and purposes of God for man, can it be claimed that the modes in which the permanent body of truth has been made known have validity ?

Granting the existence of an eternal world of

values and realities that lies outside time and space, the apprehension of these values and realities under earthly conditions must be partial and transient, and expressed under figures borrowed from time and space. Myth, as we have seen, arises out of the necessities of life in satisfaction of spiritual and temporal needs, particularly at critical junctures and on occasions which demand an exercise of faith in the adjustment of life to a given set of circumstances. It is part of a technique designed to enable man individually and collectively to deal adequately with the unpredictable elements in everyday experience in a precarious and often incomprehensible environment. As such it is manifestly primarily of local application and confined to particular conditions. But, nevertheless, it may also have a wider and deeper significance.

### *The Hebrew Creation Stories*

For example, the opening chapter of the book of Genesis is clearly an attempt to give a supernatural sanction for the observance of the Sabbath as a rest day in post-exilic Judaism. By referring back the ritual institution to the cessation of creative activity at the end of the momentous week, when according to Hebrew tradition all things were called into being, the Priestly school transformed an ecclesiastical regulation into a divine decree (cf. Ex. xx. 11)

binding on the conscience of all Jews. This law, however, like the rite of circumcision, was later regarded as being only of temporary application when the sacred associations of Sunday, for those who accepted the Christian revelation, overshadowed the resting of the Creator on the seventh day of the week. The Genesis stories then acquired other meanings for the New Israel which were given revelational evaluation in terms of the doctrine of the Fall and of Redemption.

The progress of scientific knowledge, and the critical study of the Scriptures, have now placed these narratives in a very different light from that in which they were seen by former generations. If as a result the earlier notion of literal interpretation has had to be abandoned, the unique picture of creation portrayed by the Hebrews has acquired a more profound meaning and purpose. While the affinities of these stories with Babylonian cosmogonies are fully recognized, and their place in current folk-lore has been fairly accurately determined, the religious values embodied in them are even more impressive. Instead of the crude polytheism of the contemporary legends, in the Genesis mythology all existence is made to depend on the Will of a single transcendent Deity Who is in essence ethical and with Whom man has a special relation by having been made in His image and likeness. In the naïve

story handed down in the Yahwistic document of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Gen. ii. 4-iii.), moral responsibility is stressed since it is possible for man consciously to disobey the divine commands and so to become guilty of sin to his own undoing. The evil thus introduced into the world is not due to the will of God, or to the inherent depravity of human nature as such, but comes ultimately from an extraneous source, described in terms of the ancient enmity which was supposed to have existed between man and serpents.

All this is set forth in the customary manner under the guise of myths which express the Hebrew ideas of creation current in Palestine and the surrounding districts when the narratives were drawn up in their present form. But folk-lore can be a medium of divine revelation, of *religious* truth, just as suitably as statements of historical fact. To make known God's redeeming activity on behalf of man all that is required is that the instrument through which the knowledge of salvation is given shall be intelligible to the minds of those for whom it is intended in the first instance, and at the same time be capable of re-interpretation throughout the ages. In a world in evolution there can be no finality in the mode in which thought is expressed. For the writers or compilers of Genesis to have anticipated the findings of modern scientific inquiry would have

rendered their efforts abortive. Moreover, it is no more in accordance with the principles of divine revelation to reveal the operations of the natural universe in their several manifestations in time and space, than to communicate theological systems of doctrines and beliefs. Both are equally outside its province. Revelation rightly understood, as the Archbishop of York has pointed out, is the coincidence of divinely guided events and minds divinely illuminated to interpret those events.<sup>1</sup> The marks of a true revelation are a union of holiness and power before which the human spirit bows in awe and wonder, and which authenticates itself by continuous development to some focal point wherein all preparatory revelation finds fulfilment, and from which illumination radiates into every department of life and being.

Starting from the Hebrew conviction set forth in the Creation stories that all existence is grounded in transcendent Deity Who is fundamentally ethical and the controller of events for the well-being of His human family, for whom every provision has been made in a terrestrial paradise, the problem of evil is next faced. Here we pass into the realms of very primitive folk-lore, since the narrative in all probability is based on the origin of death as the result of a subtle ruse on the part of man's arch enemy, the

<sup>1</sup> W. Temple, *Nature, God and Man* (London, 1934), pp. 314 f.

serpent, which deprived him of the fruit of the tree of life and made him eat of the tree of death. But for this fatal mistake men and not serpents would have been immortal.<sup>1</sup>

But if this type of story is in the background of the Eden myth, under Hebrew influence it has undergone a very significant change. The serpent continues to play the leading rôle in his original guise of the deceiver of mankind, though not that of his later part as the Evil One or Devil of dualistic Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, in the Genesis narrative there is no indication of a doctrine of the Fall and of original sin. This is an interpretation that has been placed upon the simple artless agricultural mythology by subsequent generations. As it stands in the Bible, like all true myths, it is merely a story told to give a supernatural foundation for the facts of life, death and reproduction, together with the misfortunes which have fallen upon the human race—loss of rejuvenation producing disease and death, the suffering of childbirth and the withdrawal of the Creator from the scene of His creative activities.

The problem of evil is not peculiar to any age or culture, and with it is coupled the perennial foreboding of decay and death. Always it has been felt

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (London, 1918), vol. I, pp. 51 ff.

that eternal life (or perpetual youth) and freedom from the ills to which flesh is heir ought to be the crowning mercy of a benevolent Providence, and would have been but for some lamentable accident or perversion. Sin and evil, disease and death are extraneous elements in a fundamentally beneficent order pronounced by its Originator as "very good." These are the basic assumptions of mankind, if the folk-lore of the race is any guide in arriving at generalizations, and they have found expression in various forms and emotional attitudes towards life and death, and good and evil.

The introduction of monotheism created a new ethical problem by raising the question of the authorship of the disabilities from which all creation suffers. In the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament no attempt is made to resolve it by reference to the primeval lapse of the first parents of the race. When speculation on the subject became prominent in later Judaism, the original taint was first referred to the *Nephilim*, or apostate angels of Gen. vi. 4. But this explanation did not account for the continuance of evil and death after the Flood. Therefore, the Eden tragedy came to be regarded as a more satisfactory cause for sin as a universal phenomenon, and at length the Rabbis were compelled to take account of it, although their theory of an "evil-imagination," or *yetser ha-ra'*, in the

heart of man (Gen. vi. 5) providentially employed by Yahweh to develop character, has always remained the official doctrine of Judaism. Under Pauline influence the doctrine of redemption in Christianity was interpreted in terms of the two Adams (Rom. v. 12 ff. ; 1 Cor. xv. 21 ff.). Thus the Eden story once more became a "narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements." (Cf. p. 40.)

### *The Evolutionary Hypothesis*

Although the Gospels give no indication that Christ made any attempt to decide between the various theories of original sin current in His day, the Pauline theology seemed adequate till the veil was lifted from the pre-human struggle for existence, with its colossal toll of suffering and death through countless ages before any Adam could have eaten of a forbidden tree. But once the facts were revealed, the generally accepted position became untenable, and to the acuter minds the far-reaching consequences of the new scientific knowledge were apparent. As long as the doctrine of sin and redemption was grounded in the Eden story, to undermine this foundation endangered the whole structure built upon it. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that



strenuous efforts were made to confute the evolutionary hypothesis in the interest of theological orthodoxy. And it must be admitted that at first the Darwinian theory itself rested on insecure evidence. As the data increased, however, the contention became irresistible, but, nevertheless, the acceptance of an evolutionary view of the universe and the origin of man did not and does not remove the problem of evil in an order that still required an ethical and beneficent Deity as its ultimate ground.

It was open to argue, of course, that while the Eden story is not an historical account of the original situation, the scientific evidence does not preclude the assumption that when man emerged as a rational moral being knowing the difference between good and evil, he was innocent in the sense that he had not committed an act of conscious sin against his Creator. This view was set forth by Gore in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge as early as 1889, and is still frequently adopted by Christian theologians. Others have advanced an allegorical interpretation of the narrative as a picture of the awakening of moral consciousness and the spiritual discovery of the true nature of man in relation to God and a sinful environment. Or, again, Adam becomes a symbol of the natural state subject to sin and death from which

redeemed humanity has been rescued by Christ, the Second Adam. More recently a Bampton Lecturer at Oxford has postulated a transcendental pre-cosmic Fall of a hypothetical "world-soul" which outside the course of history turned away from God in the direction of self through the influence of some "uncaused cause, lying within its own being," thus "shattering its own interior being." Henceforth all forms of life, "from the bacillus up to man," have become apostate and engaged in a struggle for existence. The "inherited infirmity" is identified with the herd complex created and maintained by herd instinct, which is the basis of the ethical sentiment. Hence the root of the social weakness manifested in society through the herd-tradition.<sup>1</sup>

To introduce a new cosmological mythology at this juncture, however, is a highly questionable procedure in the present hypothetical state of the available data. Thus, while it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that the universe is a product of the evolutionary process within which man has emerged from a mammalian ancestry, there is and can be no evidence concerning an "age of innocence," still less of a conjectural pre-mundane world-soul; "the only-begotten universe" of Plato's *Timæus*. At present expert opinion is by no

<sup>1</sup> N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (London, 1927).

means agreed about the unity of origin of the human race from a single pair, though there are biological reasons for regarding this conclusion as very probable. But it is a precarious business building on gaps in our knowledge, and to adopt a position which at the moment cannot be gainsaid owing to lack of evidence is at the best merely a temporary expedient. It is far better in such circumstances to suspend judgment and await further developments with an open mind.

The Genesis stories are quite clearly myths and as such they should be regarded as the expression of certain fundamental beliefs about the facts of life and human experience put in the form of a narrative stating how the existing situation was believed to have arisen in order thereby to vouch for its reality as a sequence of events and activities brought about through a providential ordering of the world and its destinies. God creates, man rebels and sins, forfeits his life in gaining knowledge, and finally regains it as an act of divine grace. These are the realities set forth. Can they be substantiated as eternal truths independent of the setting in which they are revealed?

### *The Doctrine of Creation*

That the evolutionary process is a created universe grounded in Ultimate Reality represents a

basic concept of theistic philosophy<sup>1</sup> which it would be futile to attempt to vindicate in the space at our disposal in this volume. Suffice it to say that only on the assumption of the existence of a personal Deity is it possible to explain the fact of religious experience as a universal phenomenon, or, indeed, to make sense of the universe. If there be no Ultimate Reality above and beyond succession in time there can be no end to which all things are moving, and no unity in which they cohere. So fundamental is this conviction that, as we have seen, it is an apprehension of universal import comparable to the affirmation of science that natural processes are rational and their operations capable of being known. Both are approaches to Reality which seek to validate their results by actual experience or experiment. Of course, the affirmation of the uniformity of nature and the affirmation of belief in a personal God are not identical, but both make an assertion as to a Reality behind the experience which has led to the general conclusion. Moreover, in the case of the theistic assumption, it is confirmed by the fact that when it is put to the test it proves to be the only satisfactory interpretation of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Temple, *Nature, Man and God* (London, 1934); W. R. Matthews, *God in Christian Thought and Experience* (London, 1930); F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge, 1930); A. E. Taylor, "Theism," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XII; E. S. Waterhouse, *The Philosophical Approach to Religion* (London, 1933).

phenomena, alike human and physical, it seeks to explain.

The various attempts in ancient and modern times to resolve Deity into pantheistic creativity have failed to meet the needs of religion because they make Deity virtually non-existent except as a process of becoming which as soon as it emerges ceases to be divinity at all. Thus, to take a recent example of this hypothesis, Samuel Alexander, starting from Spinoza's harmony of mind and matter as two aspects of the one underlying Reality, conceived Space-Time, or Pure Motion, as the one indivisible concrete four-dimensional Reality out of which the world emerged. Space and Time by themselves are mere abstractions, but within Space-Time are categories, or experienced features, configurations or collocations, such as existence, universality, substance, order, quantity, relation, number and motion, as well as empirical qualities. The simplest of these consist of motions, but when these form patterns they produce materiality as a new quality. Then emerge the infinite grades of existence including mind, will and deity.

On this hypothesis Space-Time is the philosophical concept of God, but Pure Motion cannot be an object of veneration, or call forth religious emotions. Therefore, Ultimate Reality is distinguished from the highest quality in the universe which

Alexander terms "Deity." As consciousness is the highest quality in human beings, so "deity" is the highest quality of God (i.e. Space-Time). The universe is the body of God, but the object of religious devotion always lies beyond mind and consciousness as the higher stage to which all things are striving. It is, however, not an Absolute concept like God (Space-Time) inasmuch as it is always changing—a "becoming" never continuing in one stay : always yet to be.<sup>1</sup>

But if Deity is the quality towards which the *nisus* of evolution is tending, rather than the Creator and Ruler of the universe, the changeless Reality abiding eternally in the heavens, as the Hebrews maintained, it is clearly impossible for man to have any personal relations with a God Who has not yet come into being. Moreover, perfection must always be a future event, never an attainable reality here and now. Consequently, the vocation of the religious man, as Alexander sees it, is that of doing his part in advancing the world towards its goal in the ideal order to be established when the evolutionary process has attained its end.

Now up to a point this is in accord with the whole idea of revelation. The "given" reveals itself in a progressive series as the mind is able to receive it, yet it always remains relative and incomplete.

<sup>1</sup> *Space, Time and Deity* (London, 1919).

Even the Kingdom of God in Jewish and Christian theology as it is realized in this world is a shadow of things to come. The mystery in its fulness is yet to be revealed. Here we see in a mirror, and man is the microcosm of nature. But evolutionary monism, unlike Christianity, regards everything as coming from below, Deity being merely the name of that quality which is next to appear. The highest spiritual functions, so far from being in opposition to what is material and of "this world," are built upon and emerge from that which has gone before. Divinity may be an *élan vital*, or unconscious striving and perpetual re-creation, as Bergson contends, or as Whitehead prefers, it may be a series of changing "events" as distinct from permanent "objects." But a "becoming," as the determination of the actual by the potential, cannot satisfy the needs of religion. Religion is not what an individual does with his solitariness,<sup>1</sup> nor "the response of mind and body to the whole of reality."<sup>2</sup> It is rather the recognition of an order of reality which transcends the ordinary and commonplace and is responsive to human needs. As such, like the universe itself, it demands an adequate ground in a changeless Being Who is the source of all that is and all that knows; of all revelation and knowledge. This truth we

<sup>1</sup> Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 31, 48.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. II, p. 377.

have found to be a permanent factor in religious experience and in that intellectual formulation of divine attributes which attempts to interpret such experience. A God, in short, revealed progressively in the self-disclosure of the Biblical revelation rather than the progressive principle supposed to emerge within the evolutionary process.

### *The Problem of Evil*

Now can we go further and make a similar claim for the other realities vouched for by the Genesis mythology? The doctrine of creation arising out of the intuitive conviction of a personal God in Whom the universe is grounded implies very much more than the belief in a First Cause. As Professor Sorley says, "it involves a more essential point than an idea either of a beginning *in* time or of a beginning *of* time. It involves the idea of God as the ground or support of the world—not merely its beginning—for without him it could not any moment exist. For this reason, while we may not see God in each natural event, we must yet look through nature to God and see his mind in its final purpose."<sup>1</sup> Thus, we are at once confronted with the problem of evil in an order established, sustained and directed to specific ends by an ethical beneficent Providence.

<sup>1</sup> *Moral Values and the Idea of God* (Cambridge, 1924), p. 459.



Apart from the baffling question of a Fall and of Original Sin, evil is a fact of experience ; an ever-present reality which is certainly not lessened by the adoption of an evolutionary view of creation. The Eden story and its Pauline corollary are merely ways of interpreting the phenomenon, and by relegating them to the realms of mythology we do not solve the ultimate problem which lies behind the myth. On any monotheistic hypothesis postulating an ethical ultimate ground of all things in a personal transcendent divine unity, room must be found for human freedom enabling man to rebel against the divine Will and so introduce a state of affairs in human society which God permits because of His self-imposed limitation consequent upon the bestowal of free-will. Without the capacity to do evil there could be no moral order, and when beings with free-will were created, the risk was taken that the gift might be wrongly used. Such a possibility could only have been prevented by God so employing His omnipotence as to compel obedience to His Will like a Dictator in a totalitarian state. Without the possibility of moral evil and of physical suffering there would be no incentive to effort, and however difficult it may be to reconcile the struggle for existence with a providential order, unquestionably it has been progressive in its achievements.

We may conclude, therefore, with Leibnitz that

this is the "best of all possible worlds," because all the evils in it are necessary for the production of the greatest possible amount of good. Nevertheless, the human order is alienated from its Creator though dependent upon His Will as the ground of its existence. But while to leave any part of it outside His control would produce a duality of ultimate principles fatal to the philosophical and theological presuppositions of the doctrine of creation, the Scriptural assertion that "the whole world lieth in the evil one" cannot be dismissed as a mere survival of an unenlightened age. On the contrary, it is an integral element in the New Testament conception of God which accords with experience. As Dr. Matthews says, a spiritual rather than an absolute dualism is forced upon "the earnest seeker after God and righteousness in his pilgrimage and warfare."<sup>1</sup> It may be only an interim phenomenon, but it exists as it may be presumed it did exist in the mind of the Creator when all things were called into being, and will not exist when the divine purpose is ultimately fulfilled (1 Cor. xv. 28).

### *The Revelation in Christ*

The restoration of a world alienated from God demanded, as it would appear from the Christian revelation, nothing less than an emergence of the

<sup>1</sup> *God in Christian Thought and Experience* (London, 1930), p. 78.

divine on the plane of history. The self-revelation of God progressively vouchsafed through a series of providentially ordered events and made explicit through men who felt themselves impelled to deliver a message from heaven, whether the people would hear or whether they would forbear, culminated at length in a new outpouring of creative activity. Thus the kingdom of God was established on earth in the person of Christ Who entered the world from the eternal order, bringing not only a new vision of Reality but a new experience of redeeming grace made efficacious through a saving act, namely, His death on the Cross and the subsequent vindication at the bursting of the tomb. As the victorious and exalted Saviour He henceforth becomes the object *par excellence* of religious experience, and in the power of His risen life gives new life to those united to Him by faith and sacrament. Although this new order is not yet fully realized and awaits the final consummation, it has made possible a new relationship between God and the world in a corporate body, or divine society, in which the individual and the social order are redeemed and made to participate in a new life of personal-social relations. In this state of grace man is enabled to attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, which is the end of his creation.

This, in brief, is the Faith which was launched

at the beginning of our era as the supreme and final revelation of God, and became the inspiration and guiding principle of the lives of those who accepted it. For them it was a new vision of Reality supported by a sacred tradition which was a direct expression of its subject-matter, and a narrative resurrection of the verities attested by their own spiritual experience. The New Testament has collected round the person of Christ in the same manner as other "mythological" revelations, and fulfils the same purpose. It does not therefore follow that the facts recorded did not actually happen, or that the portrait of Jesus is not historically true, but it is important to recognize that the Gospels are primarily religious documents setting forth the experience of the Church in its initial stage.

Until recently New Testament scholarship was mainly directed towards the discovery of the so-called "Jesus of history" in contradistinction to the hypothetical "Christ of the creeds." This futile search is now giving place to a more hopeful quest. To-day we are coming to see that the Evangelists were neither biographers nor historians. The records they have left us represent the impression which our Lord made on His followers both as individuals and in their corporate experience as members of a fellowship of believers. Some must have known Him in the flesh, but for the majority it was

through the "foolishness of preaching," and by personal contact with other disciples, that His life and teaching were revealed and evaluated as living realities. Revelation, being the disclosure of truth which cannot be apprehended merely by the senses or the ordinary processes of thought, is made real in a living experience associated with divinely guided events. It is more than a subjective reaction or human discovery because it comes to man from an external source in the name of the living God with the authority of immediate inspiration. In the case of the Hebrew prophets inspired utterance was expressed through the formula "Thus saith Yahweh," but the writers of the Gospels do not hesitate to assign to Jesus the plenitude of spiritual authority by attributing to Him the words "I say unto you."

Christ Himself, of course, left no written records as a guide for future generations, and the accounts of His sayings and actions have come down to us in the form of narratives compiled from various sources and traditions during the latter part of the first century A.D. Since it was the custom of Rabbis to make their disciples commit to memory their actual words, it is not improbable that some of our Lord's utterances were learnt from His own lips and subsequently written down in collections of "Sayings." But the material from which the Gos-

pels were compiled was in a fluid state before it was crystallized into its final shape. The main interest of those engaged in proclaiming to the world the "Good News" of the redeeming love and grace of God was the way in which this divine act of redemption had been accomplished. Therefore, they made the story of the Passion and the fact of the Resurrection their central theme.

Those who had been eye-witnesses of the final tragedy, or who had come into personal contact with the apostles, knew how their hopes had been laid in the grave with the body of their Master and then suddenly and unexpectedly revived by the startling announcement of the Resurrection. Under the inspiration of this new hope—and incidentally long before the stories of the alleged "appearances" of the risen Lord were recorded—the dejected, doubting, despondent group was transformed into a band of zealous and fearless preachers of the new Gospel based on the assertion that God had reversed the judgment of man and raised up His "holy child Jesus" as the Saviour of the human race. If the tomb was not empty on "the third day," why the "idle tales" of overwrought women, and the collective hallucinations of ardent disciples, were not once and for all dispelled by the production of the body has never been very adequately explained. But whatever interpretation is to

be put on the historical situation, there can be no possibility of doubt concerning the nature of the message proclaimed in season and out of season by the Apostolic Church. Jesus had suffered and died, "the just for the unjust, to bring men to God" Who had put His seal upon the atoning death by raising Him from the grave. This was the new vision of reality they had seen, and for them it solved wholly and completely the age-long problem of sin, suffering and death. Consequently, they centred their teaching and preaching in the Passion story and its sequel.

All the events in the last week of our Lord's life on earth were noted in the greatest detail, and repeated constantly at the weekly Eucharistic assembly, and on other occasions, with the utmost care and precision. This narrative represents the earliest continuous section of the Gospel tradition, just as it subsequently occupied the major portion of the written documents in their final form. To it was added at a very early period stories about the life of Jesus and many of His sayings, collected and preserved as cycles of connected reminiscences associated with the various centres of His ministry (cf. St. Mark i. 21-39; iv. 35; v. 43; vi. 30; viii. 26). Finally, the accounts of His birth and infancy gained currency though apparently they circulated in restricted circles. Thus, St. Paul gives

no indication of having been acquainted with them, any more than does St. Mark, or the author of the Fourth Gospel. Moreover, the Lucan and Matthean versions of what took place are not easily harmonized. It does not follow, of course, that these narratives are devoid of historical significance, but it is clear that the infancy tradition did not occupy a prominent place in the original preaching and teaching of the Faith. There is no reason to suppose, therefore, that the doctrine of the Incarnation grew out of stories about the miraculous conception of Jesus since the Virgin Birth only gradually became widely accepted as the most satisfactory explanation of the fact that the Word was made flesh in the sacred humanity of Jesus. In this way it gained its place in the credal definition of the doctrine as a permanent and universal tradition of Christendom.

Throughout the whole of this process of formulation the theological motive was the determining factor. The main concern was always with the practical problem of presenting to the world the new way of salvation. Therefore, when the time came, from about A.D. 50 and onwards, for the documents to be drawn up and collated, the subject-matter of the original teaching and apologetic formed the basis of the written records, just as administrative questions were prominent in the



Pauline letters. It was not till the second century that a very different type of literature arose, purely legendary in character, in which an attempt was made to introduce an "historical" element in the life of Jesus in the form of fantastic stories about His childhood, earthly career and resurrection. In striking contrast to these Apocryphal Gospels is the historical reality. This was the basis of the theological truths made known in terms of a living faith calculated to meet the deepest religious needs, moral sanctions and social requirements of mankind, irrespective of class, creed, race or nationality. In Jesus they felt that they had been in touch with Ultimate Reality which is none other than the living God. This conviction was confirmed by every penetrating word He uttered, every mighty act or deed of mercy He performed, every parable He propounded, and crowned by His agonizing Cross and Passion leading up to the glory of His Resurrection and Exaltation. The Reign of God had come with power, and they were the witnesses thereof. So they believed and so they proclaimed to the world the unique revelation which they had received from outside history made explicit in that higher reality, the Kingdom of God.

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## CHAPTER III

### RITUAL AND WORSHIP

As faith is based on revelation made concrete in myth which vouches for the reality of that which is revealed, so myth in its turn is intimately related to ritual, or *dromenon*, as the Greeks would have said. From time immemorial man has "danced out his religion," or, in other words, dramatized the inmost desires of his soul and the collective emotions of society. Thus, the basic myths are actually the verbal expression of ritual situations upon which the well-being of the community depends. Hence the recurrence of a culture pattern in all the religions of the Ancient East, centring in the things which were done to and by the king in order to secure the continuance of the beneficence of Providence.

#### *The Royal Ritual Pattern in Egypt*

Exactly how and why the king came to be regarded as embodying in his own divine person all the fortunes of the state is still a matter upon which expert opinion is sharply divided, but that he did occupy this position, and exercised direct control over the processes of nature, is beyond dispute. Thus, in Ancient Egypt the life of the nation was

wrapped up in the occupant of the throne, who was regarded as the physical son of the Sun-god in his various manifestations and syncretisms, represented by the titles Re, Atum, Horus, Khepri, and later in combination with Amon at Thebes. To maintain the divine succession the king married his sister, and in later times the supposed visitation of the Sun-god to the palace of the queen to beget an heir, was enacted in the rite of a sacred connubium between Pharaoh and his consort. The son born of this incestuous union was prepared for his vocation by ceremonial lustrations performed by officiants who impersonated the god Atum and Moreth, or Re-Horus and Amon.

On the day of his accession he was publicly acknowledged by the Sun-god as his son, and again purified with "the water of life which is in the sky." Henceforth this ablution was repeated every morning at dawn with water from a sacred pool identified with the primeval ocean out of which Re was born at the creation. He was then censed to unite him with the solar Horus of the Horizon (not to be confused with Horus the son of Isis and Osiris), and presented with balls of natron to chew in order to complete his rebirth. Finally, he ascended the stairs of the great window to behold the Sun-god, thereby symbolizing his rising like the morning sun out of the waters. These "toilet ceremonies," as

they are called, concluded with the investiture of the king with the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt, together with the flail and the crook or sceptre. Therefore, they would seem to be a repetition of the coronation rite as well as a re-enactment of the solar myth. As such they constituted the principal part of the daily worship of the temple.

Before a monarch can ascend the throne he always has to be crowned and consecrated, and in ancient society the coronation ceremony was the means by which the king was made divine by undergoing a process of rebirth in imitation of the things that were thought to have happened to the gods at the creation. To be of divine descent was not enough. The prince had to be born again because only through a ritual rebirth could he become "another man," that is to say, a god. During the installation rite all the essential elements in the original drama had to be repeated in order that thereby the beneficent forces of Providence might be renewed at their source by the ritual revivification of their earthly embodiment.

In Egypt the daily temple liturgy seems to have been derived from that celebrated on behalf of the Sun-god at Heliopolis, the cult-centre of the worship of Re where the state fiction arose which gave Pharaoh his solar descent. Consequently, being

based on the coronation ceremony, it had a creative significance. The preliminary purification of the priest in the water of the sacred pool, the solemn opening of the doors of the shrine, and the censuring of the cultus-image, the removal of its garments and ornaments, and its re-investiture with royal apparel and insignia, concluding with the presentation of food and drink-offerings, are a repetition of the toilet rites of the Pharaoh in the House of the Morning. What had been done to the Sun-god and his son must be done to his visible and local embodiment, the cultus-image. The temple liturgy, therefore, would seem to have been a derivative of the royal ritual, and the coronation rite that lies behind it, the purpose of which ultimately was to secure the favour of the gods for the king and the community. In return for the due performance of these sacred actions, health, stability and abundance were granted because Pharaoh was the heir to the powers and qualities of the deities whose functions and attributes he symbolized in the ritual and regalia of the royal estate. As the source of vitality, the welfare of the king was the welfare of the state, and of the fructifying processes of nature.

At an early period, however, another theology was incorporated into the Egyptian monarchy which has produced considerable confusion by introducing a death and resurrection motive into

the cultus. According to this mythology, which some Egyptologists regard as earlier and others as later than the solar scheme, the earth-god Keb, and the sky-goddess Nut, produced two brothers, Osiris and Seth, and their sisters, Isis and Nephthys. Isis became the wife of Osiris and Nephthys of Seth. Keb, who was king of Egypt, handed over the throne to Osiris, who left his brother Seth in charge of the country while he travelled over the world to diffuse a knowledge of agriculture, first discovered when Isis cultivated barley. On his return Seth, moved to envy and jealousy, killed Osiris but concealed the body. The distracted Isis sought the corpse throughout the length and breadth of Egypt, and finally found it at Byblus on the Syrian coast. But Seth again discovered it and cut it into fragments. These Isis collected, and so grievous was her lamentation that Re was moved to send Anubis, the funerary physician, to mummify the scattered remains which the two devoted sisters had reassembled. Fanning the restored body with her wings, as some accounts say, Isis resuscitated her husband, and hovering over him in the form of a hawk she conceived a son, Horus, whom she brought up secretly in the Delta. On attaining manhood he determined to avenge the murder of his father, and to this end engaged in mortal combat with Seth. In a series of battles



he lost his eye, but Thoth, the god of wisdom, restored it to him. Thereupon he gave it to his father to eat to make him "strong in soul." But Seth disputed the legitimacy of his conqueror, and a trial was staged before the nine gods (Ennead) in Heliopolis, presided over by Re. Thoth pleaded the cause of Osiris and proved that he was "true of voice," and that Horus was his son and successor. Seth was rejected and Osiris appointed Judge and Lord of the land of the dead.

The origin of this myth is obscure, but with local modifications it recurs throughout the Ancient East from Egypt to the Aegean, Syria and Mesopotamia, in association with the dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of a divine hero. It has been suggested that Osiris was actually a renowned figure in antiquity—a civilizing divine king of Egypt who reigned in the Delta, or that he was the man who first introduced irrigation. Having in some such capacity acquired fame during his lifetime, after death he was deified. Against this euhemeran theory, it has been contended that he was the local god of the city of Ded (or Dêdet) in the Delta—the Busiris of the Greeks (i.e. the "Home of Osiris")—where a curiously shaped pillar resembling a telegraph pole, with circular projections separating bands of various colours, was thought to be his backbone. Here apparently the

original centre of the worship was located. In the Pyramid Texts, on the other hand, he is represented as a personification of the fructifying waters of the inundation (the Nile) making the "verdure to flourish in the two regions of the horizon." He is also intimately associated with other natural phenomena, as, for example, the germinating crops. All these attributes, however, are probably secondary to his main rôle of the dead king restored to life.

The annual rise and fall of the inundation, spreading fertilizing mud over the fields from which luxuriant vegetation sprang, would be readily connected with the dying and reviving god. Similarly, in Mesopotamia the death and revival of Tammuz, the lover-son of Ishtar (the Sumerian counterpart of Osiris and Isis), the hero is said to have perished in the waters of the midsummer flood and been restored from the underworld in the spring, when the rains bring a rapid renewal of life. The Græco-Phœnician Adonis and the Phrygian Attis are later equivalents of Tammuz and Osiris, each figure in all probability having been derived from the ancient ritual of the divine kingship.

In Egypt, Osiris was always the dead king and his son Horus played the rôle of the living king. When Osiris was given a place in the sun as his cultus grew in popularity, the solar priests of Heli-

opolis were compelled to make terms with the death and resurrection cultus. It is clear from the recently discovered Chester Beatty papyrus that originally the two theologies were in opposition, but after the collapse of the central government at the end of sixth Dynasty, or Pyramid Age (c. 1400 B.C.), the cult of the dead ceased to be a royal prerogative, and every Egyptian who had not adopted the Heliopolitan solar worship looked to Thoth to do for him what he had done for Osiris and Horus when he vindicated them before the nine gods at the heavenly trial. Henceforth Pharaoh reigned in the capacity of Horus, and at death became Osiris, while his relationship with any god or goddess was equivalent to that of the two heroes (Horus and Osiris). Similarly, for ritual purposes, every divinity was an Osiris, and Pharaoh (or the priest who represented him) fulfilled the function of Horus in the temple ceremonial.

Thus, at the Harvest Festival the king personifying Horus reaped a sheaf of corn "for his father" (Osiris). Or, again, at the conclusion of the Spring Festival held in honour of the death and resurrection of Osiris, the king and members of the royal family assisted at Busiris in raising the *Ded* column, symbolizing the restoration of the god. But if Pharaoh had his part to play in controlling the

beneficent forces on which the crops and the general well-being of the nation depended, as its dynamic centre, he also required a renewal of his own divine powers. The Spring rites, in short, were held in all probability to enable him to exercise his royal functions during the forthcoming year, while at longer intervals, perhaps every thirty years, a special ritual, known as the *Sed*-festival, was performed as a special act of revivification. Thus, during the course of the rites the reigning monarch was wrapped in bandages like a mummy, and held in his hands the sceptre and flail. On ascending a flight of steps to a shrine he assumed the garments of Osiris, and he was then enthroned as the restored divinity. By these means he underwent a ritual regeneration as is clear from the declaration, "thou beginnest thy renewal, beginnest to flourish again like the infant god of the Moon, thou art young again year by year, like Nun at the beginning of the ages, thou art reborn by renewing thy festival of *Sed*."

Professor Breasted thinks that this is the oldest religious festival of which there is any trace in Egypt, and Sir Flinders Petrie sees in it a modification of the ancient custom of killing divine kings when they were still at the height of their vigour in order that the sacred life might be transmitted to a successor undiminished. Since the life of Pharaoh

was bound up with the prosperity of the country and the processes of fertility, it is not improbable that it was held to be essential to maintain a virile occupant of the throne, lest through lack of vitality at the fountain head of society, the flocks and herds should languish, the fields cease to yield their increase, and men become weak and sickly. To guard against these calamities the king may well have been put to death as in other communities where this theory obtained. In this case the *Sed*-festival represents a ritual modification of an original regicide.

### *The Babylonian Annual Festival*

Since this periodic jubilee was held at the Spring Festival it coincided with the New Year celebrations which always have represented the climax of the religious activities of the year. It was, therefore, an appropriate occasion for a rejuvenescence by ceremonial re-investiture as a modification of the original practice of slaying the king when he showed signs of declining vitality. This ritual killing by a symbolic act assumed various guises in the New Year Festival. In Babylonia, for instance, the death and resurrection of Marduk (an ancient solar deity who succeeded to the primacy of the pantheon when Babylon became the capital) was enacted as an essential part of the rites celebrated at Esagila

in the month of Nisan. To bring light and life out of decay and darkness the Creation Epic was recited, and the slaying of Tiamat, the leader of the powers of evil, was set forth in a ritual drama portraying the struggle between two opposing forces, as in the mortal combat of Seth and Horus in Egypt. In this episode the hero Marduk is not himself killed and restored, as in the Osiris myth, but, nevertheless, he is imprisoned in a mountain (probably symbolical of the underworld),<sup>1</sup> lamented by his consort and finally made to emerge victoriously. Thus, the story preserves the main features of the Osiris-Tammuz ritual which unquestionably lies behind it. Furthermore, not only are the powers of evil destroyed, but the king renews his potency by seizing the hands of the image of the divine conqueror (Marduk) and receives absolution from the priests, having first delivered up his regalia as an act of abdication. In this way he saves his life, retains his throne and renews the processes of nature at the turn of the year by resigning his office and being reinstated in it by the god whom he impersonates.

As Professor S. H. Hooke has demonstrated, around this central idea of the place and function

<sup>1</sup> As recently shown by Dr. Frankfort, a god is depicted on Babylonian seals in the act of cutting down a tree or trees on a mountain in which he is imprisoned (*Iraq*, vol. I, i, pp. 21 f., 1934). The tree is suggestive of the Osirian *Ded*-column, and therefore of resurrection.

of the kingship in relation to the beneficent powers incarnate in their earthly representative, a definite pattern of myth and ritual was assembled in ancient society for the purpose of securing the well-being of the community for the coming year.<sup>1</sup> Originally, apparently, the ruler was killed when his physical powers began to diminish, but in due course this barbarous custom was transformed into a dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the divine monarch, performed by priests and members of the royal family, at the Annual Festival in the spring or autumn. The drama comprised a sacred combat in which the victory of the god over his enemies was enacted, the recitation of the creation story and the reproduction of its principal features in the ceremonies, the enthronement of the hero and a sacred marriage, contracted to ensure the fruitfulness of the earth and the fecundity of man and beast.

This is the framework of all New Year Festivals and installation rites from Ancient Egypt and Babylonia to those of the Christian Church,<sup>2</sup> though in the process of diffusion and re-interpretation the various constituent elements have undergone considerable modification. For instance, among the

<sup>1</sup> *Myth and Ritual* (Oxford, 1933); *The Labyrinth* (London, 1935); *The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual* (London, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the author's *Christian Myth and Ritual* (London, 1933) for a detailed analysis of the pattern in its Christian form.

Hebrews, despite their proximity to and many cultural contacts with Babylonia, Syria and Egypt, though the pattern is discernible in the Jerusalem cultus, it has been broken up and redistributed almost beyond recognition. This may be explained partly by the fact that two New Year Festivals were observed in Israel, but also as a result of the strenuous efforts made by the prophetic movement to eliminate all traces of the ritual. Nevertheless, it would be very surprising if the Passover, which was held at the same time as the Babylonian *Akitu* (New Year Festival) in the month of Nisan, did not contain relics of the parallel spring observances, since both rites originally had a similar significance. Thus, it began on the 10th of Nisan and continued till the 21st, as in the case of Babylonian *Akitu*, and reached its climax on the night of the 14th, when the moon was full.

### *The Feast of the Passover*

Unfortunately our knowledge of the Hebrew calendrical ritual comes from comparatively late sources, and the observances have been so completely re-interpreted that it is exceedingly difficult to determine exactly what was done originally, leave alone why the rites were held. Furthermore, in the case of the Passover, in addition to the various accounts of the festival having been overlaid with



later ideas, the ancient blood ritual of the sacrifice of the firstborn (*Pesach*) has been combined with a vegetation cultus of the offering of the first-fruits (*Massôth*, or Feast of Unleavened Bread). In the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22-xxiii. 31), one of the earliest codes of Israel embedded in the book of Exodus, the coincidence of the *Massôth* with the Spring festival and a rather obscure reference to the offering of the firstborn occur, but no details are given of the ritual. From the later accounts (Ex. xii. and xiii.) it may be inferred that the central feature of the rites was the eating of an animal victim (sheep or goat) at the vernal equinox as a sacramental meal in which, in all probability, the flesh was consumed raw and the blood drunk to imbibe the life, as in the Arabic camel sacrifice in the fifth century A.D. described by Nilus.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, this practice was prohibited (Ex. xii. 8 f.), and finally, after the observance had been transformed into an ætiological myth centring in the story of the Exodus (with which, of course, at first it had no connexion) an ancient blood-smearing rite was incorporated into the ordinance (Ex. xii. 22).

In Ex. v. 1 it is affirmed that the feast was to be held in the wilderness where there would be no houses with lintels and door-posts capable of being re-enforced by magico-religious agents against the

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites* (London, 1925), p. 338.

nocturnal ravages of the Destroyer, to say nothing of persecuting Egyptians. Nevertheless, the vernal equinox was a fateful season apart from any Paschal associations as set out in the later story. It was then that the Spring Festival was held which reached its climax on the 14th of Nisan when the moon was full. In Babylonia, as we have seen, this was the occasion for the enactment of the struggle between Marduk and Tiamat, culminating in the renewal of the king's accession. If behind this ritual lay a grimmer custom of slaying the occupant of the throne, if not annually at least when his natural powers began to wane, it is not improbable that the Paschal victim represents an animal substitute for a human victim. There are, in fact, many indications in the Old Testament that human sacrifice was by no means unknown in the history of Israel (cf. Gen. xxii. 1-13, Jos. vi. 26, Judges xi. 30 ff., 1 Kings xvi. 34, 2 Kings xxiii. 10), and if in later ages this form of offering was not regarded as wholly unacceptable to Yahweh (Gen. xxii. 1-13), even though the sanction be spiritualized in the form of a prophetic Midrash, in less refined ages the injunction of the Book of the Covenant—"the firstborn of thy sons shall thou give unto me" (Ex. xxii. 29)—may have been literally enforced. At no moment in the year would a fresh outpouring of life in all its pristine and youthful vigour be more

urgently needed than at the vernal equinox, when potent forces of evil had to be kept at bay and the powers of nature renewed in the interests of the community.

As Frazer says, amid all the obscurities of the Paschal ritual "the one thing that looms clear through all the haze of this weird tradition is the memory of a great massacre of firstborn."<sup>1</sup> If the annual commemoration of that terrible night when the Destroyer went forth on his bloody campaign was a survival of the custom of offering human victims to strengthen the king as the dynamic centre of the community, the merging of the *Pesach*, or firstborn rite, with the *Massôth*, or vegetation equivalent, is readily explained since both had a common significance, viz., the renewal of the forces of nature in the spring. Thus, the Feast of Unleavened Bread coincided with the beginning of the grain harvest (Deut. xvi. 9; Ex. xxxiv. 18), the offering of the first-fruits being symbolized by the waving of the sheaf (*'omer*) before Yahweh in Nisan (Lev. xxiii. 11). This practice has a considerable history behind it, and was unquestionably performed to promote the fertility of the crops during the forthcoming season.

In the recently discovered Ras Shamra tablets, the Syrian form of this festival is set forth in terms

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Bough*, Pt. IV, p. 176.

of the combat between Mot, the son of the gods and controller of the crops, and Eleion, the son of Baal, the sky god who sends the rain. These two divinities engage in the usual struggle, like Horus and Seth and Marduk and Tiamat, till at length Mot kills Eleion, and his sister Anath (who plays the rôle of Isis, or Ishtar) goes in search of him. Finding at her feet the last sheaf of grain, in which Mot has taken refuge, she seizes it, cuts the ears, threshes them, roasts the grain, grinds it in a mill and scatters the flour over the fields, like the dismembered body of Osiris. Then she eats bread with leaven, having removed the taboo by her destruction of the adversary. In Israel seven weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the beginning of wheat harvest and the end of barley harvest, two "wave loaves" baked with leaven (Lev. xxiii. 17) were offered at the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (*Shabu'oth*), together with a male lamb and a meal offering of the first-fruits (Lev. xxiii. 12 f., ii. 14). As the destruction of Mot led to the resuscitation of Eleion in the Syrian death and resurrection drama, so the offering of the first-fruits of harvest in the form of a meal offering of the two loaves baked with leaven, analogous to the waving of the barley-sheaf at *Massôth*, renewed the processes of vegetation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oesterley, *Myth and Ritual*, p. 121.

In this connexion it is significant that in a corresponding Egyptian rite, recorded in the Ramesseum Papyrus, two cakes representing the eye of Horus were presented by the priest to the king in the coronation ceremony as the counterpart of the offering of the eye of Horus to Osiris to revivify and strengthen him.

### *The Feast of Tabernacles and Messianic Theology*

Finally, at the "turn of the year," in the autumn, the New Year Festival was held in Israel at the Ingathering, known to us as *Sukkôth*, or the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 13). This event marked the end of the olive and vintage harvest, and originally it was accompanied by dancing and hilarity appropriate to the occasion (Judges xxi. 19 ff.; Ex. xxxii. 19; Deut. xvi. 15; Is. xxx. 29; Lev. xxiii. 40). The proceedings, as they are recorded in the Old Testament, opened and closed with the keeping of a rest day, or Sabbath, the intervening week having been spent in booths made of "olive and myrtle branches of thick trees" (Neh. viii. 15; cf. Lev. xxiii. 40). The myrtle was sacred to Astarte, and the "booth," or "tabernacle," resembled in form the Babylonian *gigunnû* of cedar erected apparently in the temple of Marduk as a nuptial chamber for the sacred marriage of the king and queen. There-

fore, all the circumstances surrounding the festival, both as regards the date when it was held, and the ceremonial accompaniments, are suggestive of a vegetation motive in line with that which underlay the Annual Festival in other parts of the Ancient East.

Moreover, it has now been demonstrated that the purpose of the rite was to celebrate the enthronement of Yahweh as the King and Lord of creation in order to ensure a plentiful rainfall and the material prosperity of the nation during the ensuing year.<sup>1</sup> Like the Passover, it was re-interpreted by the Priestly school in terms of the Exodus, and in consequence its original meaning has been obscured, but the close connexion between the observance of the festival and the control of the weather is preserved in a post-exilic reference in Zechariah xiv. 16 f., where it is said that no rain shall fall on those "families of the earth" which do not go up to Jerusalem to observe the feast. This conception of the gift of rain being dependent upon the keeping of the Annual Festival is the natural result of the worship of Yahweh as king (*malek*), in the ancient sense of the term, and the same belief seems to underlie many of the liturgical psalms used in the temple worship where the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oesterley, *Myth and Ritual*, pp. 422 ff.; A. R. Johnson, *The Labyrinth*, pp. 85 ff.; S. Mowinckel, *Psalmestudier*, vol. II, 1922.

kingship of Yahweh is proclaimed and His creative power extolled (Ps. lxxv. 9-13; civ. 13 ff.; xxix, xlvii.).

The ritual combat, which as we have seen is so prominent in the seasonal drama, has no place in the Hebrew festival, but in a spiritualized form it recurs in the Psalter (Ps. xxix, lxxxix. 8-10, xciii, cf. Job xxvi. 12 f.), where Yahweh is represented as triumphing over the powers of the deep. The death and restoration theme may also be discerned in the "Servant passages" in the psalms and in the later chapters in the book called Isaiah in which the anointed is said to be "the highest of the kings of the earth" whose "seed shall be made to endure for ever and his throne as the days of heaven." He then suffers a reverse and is humiliated, so that his enemies are made to rejoice (Ps. lxxxix; Is. liii.). But his life is renewed; the cords of Sheol are broken, and like Osiris and Tammuz he is restored. Out of His holy temple Yahweh hears his voice and his cry before Him comes to His ears. "Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the mountains moved and were shaken because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down: and thick darkness was under his feet, and he rode

upon a cherub, and did fly : yea, he flew swiftly under the wings of the wind " (Ps. xviii).

In such terms as these the catastrophic divine intervention on behalf of the anointed Servant is described, as in the Syrian Eleion solar myth. His restoration is the vindication of his righteousness, and the victor extols the name of His divine vindicator. " Yahweh liveth, and blessed be my rock : and exalted be the God of my salvation." He has rescued him from his enemies and lifted him up above those who rose up against him. Great deliverance has He given to His king and showed His loving kindness to His anointed, " to David and to his seed for evermore."

### *The Influence of the Prophetic Movement*

While the fundamental ideas of the ancient myth and ritual pattern appear to have survived in Jerusalem after the Exile in the Messianic thought of the second temple, the prophetic movement had introduced a profound change in outlook. The Saviour-god was no longer the controller of the processes of vegetation, though, as we have seen, this notion was not wholly absent from the observance of the Annual Festival at Jerusalem. But the emphasis was placed on ethical righteousness, and the " work of salvation " dimly foreshadowed in the sacrifice of the divine king, acquired a spiritual significance.



The "humiliation" instead of being a ritual act became the self-offering of one who on account of his pre-eminent righteousness was the innocent victim in a vicarious sacrifice. These at least are ideas that seem to underlie the Servant Saga in the Deutero-Isaiah (Is. xlii. 1-4 ; l. 4-11 ; lii. 13-liii.), and the Messianic psalms.

Before the Exile the Hebrew seasonal rites doubtless conformed in all essential points to the ritual-drama as it existed in the surrounding nations, and it was for this reason that the prophets in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. regarded the vegetation cultus as a whole as thoroughly corrupt, and had little hopes of the monarchy of which it was an integral part. Therefore, they appealed to the desert tradition as the true and only legitimate source of the religion of Israel. Thus, Amos, who had been brought up in the pastoral culture of Tekoa in isolation from the agricultural community, appears to have denied the divine origin of sacrifice, and refused to admit that it was part of the original nomadic culture of the nation. "Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" (Amos v. 25). Again, his successor Hosea declared, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hos. vi. 6). In the Southern Kingdom of Judah Isaiah condemned

even the sacrificial worship of the temple at Jerusalem (Is. i. 11), and Jeremiah affirmed that God spake not unto the fathers of Israel in the desert concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices, but called them to walk in His ways (Jer. vii. 22 f.). It was not till the Exile had destroyed the monarchy that the ritual order was safely restored, and an objective worship re-established on a new basis, which nevertheless preserved in general outline and structure the former pattern, but with a new interpretation of the ancient design.

The high-priesthood which was then set up to take the place of the monarchy inherited many of the functions and privileges of the kingship, but without its divine prerogatives and claims. The symbolism of the blood as the life remained (Lev. xvii. 11 ; iii. 2, 7, 13 ; vii. 1 f. ; viii. 14 f.), but instead of being the means of revivifying the dying god to renew the processes of vegetation and drive forth the powers of evil, it became a compensation for injury, and a sign of inward cleansing by true repentance (Ps. li. 16 f.), though, as we shall see in another connexion, a very primitive ceremonial was revived in the Day of Atonement observances. The whole sacrificial system, like the seasonal festivals, were referred back to the beginnings of the nation in the desert in the days of Moses, and subsequently to David

and Solomon, to give them a new divine national sanction independent of their real antecedents in the ancient world. In this way the ritual was severed from its former associations, and brought into conjunction with the more spiritual traditions of the prophetic movement. Thus, it became possible to give them a new evaluation.

For the prophets worship was a subjective experience arising out of the sense of man's dependence on an all-righteous God Who is more concerned with ethical conduct than ritual practice. In the intense individualism of Jeremiah, for example, sacrifice had no place. Each man must suffer for his own sins and each man must be saved by his own righteousness. Consequently, the new covenant he anticipated when the desolation of the nation should have regenerated the apostate people, would be purely ethical, written in their hearts (Jer. xxxi. 33 f.). Ezekiel, on the other hand, while he was as insistent as his predecessors on the need of a change of heart, and the maintenance of spiritual religion, saw the vision of a new order when a cultus fulfilling these conditions would be established (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, xx. 40-44, xxxvii. 26 ff.). It was this which eventually was realized with at least some measure of success.

The Temple became "the house of prayer for all people" hallowed by a continual stream of sacri-

ficial offerings and oblations, liturgical prayers and psalms, music and stately processions which were certainly not devoid of spiritual meaning and appeal, as is clearly revealed in the Psalter. The development of the Synagogue after the Maccabæan revolt, and possibly earlier, fostered a deeper reverence for and understanding of the Law (*Torah*), and prepared the way for the survival of congregational worship independent of the sacrificial cultus, after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. That this played a significant part in preserving the national unity of Jewry in the time of the dispersion can hardly be doubted, though it has always been recognized that it was but a temporary substitute for the complete Levitical sacrificial cultus in abeyance till the temple could be restored. Throughout its long and chequered history the religious sanctions and convictions of Israel have always been the unifying force which has enabled the scattered nation to retain its individuality despite every obstacle it has encountered in a hostile environment. If a secular and "liberal" movement has made considerable progress in Jewry to-day, the culture remains an outstanding example of the cohesive function of religion in society based on a common faith and worship.

*The Christian Drama of Redemption*

Moreover, out of Judaism Christianity emerged with a new and spiritual conception of the kingship. It may be a far cry from the crude primitive notion of the dependence of the processes of fecundity on the virility of the head of the community as the incarnation of a beneficent Providence to the Christ in Whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, but as has been demonstrated, myth and ritual are representations of reality adapted to the needs of particular cultural levels. When the ancient pattern was brought into relation with the Messianic hope of Israel it underwent a profound spiritual re-orientation and significance. From being a ritual device to secure the continuance and prosperity of the natural order and human society, it became an integral element in an ethical system having a new religious and cultural setting. But in post-exilic Judaism the equation of Zerubbabel, the Prince, with the idealized Davidic kingship eliminated the idea of humiliation and suffering from the figure of the Saviour-god, though it persisted in the psalms of this period. The later eschatology under the influence of Persian dualism conceived the reign of God as a restored kingdom either on earth or in a new creation, preceded by a great struggle with the forces of evil, variously

symbolized by wars, pestilences, earthquakes and famine, as the beginning of the "Messianic Woes" which heralded the coming of the Deliverer. The final victory would involve the resurrection of the faithful Israelites when the work of salvation was completed in the victorious rule of the divine kingship.<sup>1</sup>

The equation of Jesus with the Messiah meant nothing less than the establishment of the divine sovereignty here and now *de facto*, as a realized reality rather than a future event. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom [i.e. the reign of God] is at hand" (St. Mark i. 15). In other words, the kingly rule of God has begun.<sup>2</sup> This announcement, of course, carries with it ecclesiastical and sociological applications as in primitive society, since a divine theocracy or "kingdom" is the inevitable result of sovereign lordship. The new revelation as a present reality must be made concrete in a sacred tradition and ritual representation if it is to become a living power in men's lives and fulfil its purpose in the world. Thus, as soon as this "realised eschatology" was launched, around the Person of Christ the King and the drama of redemption the ancient pattern was re-assembled and re-evaluated in ethical and spiritual concepts.

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word *malkuth* signifies "sovereignty" or "kingship of God" rather than "kingdom." Therefore, the kingdom really meant for the Jews the kingship or sovereign rule of God.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935), pp. 34 ff.

This was facilitated by the fact that Christianity had restored the element which had dropped out in Judaism. Nowhere in the Jewish apocalyptic literature is the conception of a suffering Messiah to be found, and the one and only reference to his death (2 Esdras vii. 29 f.) has no relation to his office. The new gospel, on the other hand, centred in the proclamation of the conquest of sin and death by the victorious struggle of the divine Saviour which culminated in His resurrection and exaltation. It was the preaching of this familiar theme in an entirely new and spiritually acceptable form which turned the world upside down. As Dr. Matthews says, "no small part of the power of Christianity has arisen from the fact that it has retained the ancient Figure of the torn and defeated divine Being while removing from it much of its materialistic and magical setting. Whenever, in the supposed interests of philosophical decency, this appealing Figure has been relegated to the background, the grip of Christian faith has weakened. This is, after all, only another way of saying that when Jesus on the Cross as God and Man ceases to be preached the Gospel evaporates."<sup>1</sup>

It was not enough, however, to proclaim this new message of salvation by word of mouth, since every apprehension of reality when it acquires a

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Construction* (London, 1933), p. 185.

religious content has to find some outward and visible means of giving expression to its affirmations if it is to be both effective and efficacious. Ethical and philosophical systems, and even prophetic movements, noble and lofty though they may be in their aims and concepts, seldom if ever play a dominant part in public life and private concerns unless they are given some tangible mode of expression as a directing influence in a cultus. In Israel, for instance, while the actual utterances of the Hebrew prophets fell on deaf ears so long as they remained merely spoken words, their message bore abundant fruit when it became the inspiration of a worshipping community after the Exile. So with Christianity. The Gospel preached had to be "dramatized" and made effective sacramentally if it was to become the Catholic Faith, and not merely an obscure sectarian ethic.

From the very beginning it would seem the Christian community was in the habit of assembling together in private houses on the first day of the week for the specific purpose of corporate worship, independent of attendance at Jewish rites in the temple and synagogues (Acts xx. 7). This took the form of a Eucharistic gathering at which the last sacred meal of Christ and His disciples, identified with the Passover, was re-enacted, and the story of the Passion was repeated. Exactly what took



place in the Upper Room at Jerusalem on the night in which Jesus was betrayed is not easy to determine. That it was not the Passover itself is highly probable since, apart from other cogent reasons, it is very difficult to imagine how the subsequent events could have taken place on the Feast Day (cf. St. Mark xiv. 2 ; St. Matt. xxvi. 5 ; St. John xviii. 28 ; xix. 14). But even so, unquestionably it had a Paschal significance in view of its very close proximity to the feast, so that by the time the Synoptic narratives were drawn up it was identified with it. Furthermore, the two events were brought into conjunction with the death of Jesus, and related to the offering of the blood of the new covenant ; be it that of the Paschal victim or the Mosaic institution (St. Mark xiv. 24).

For St. Paul, Christ was none other than the Passover lamb on Whom the faithful feed (1 Cor. v. 7). As the old covenant had been sealed in blood, so the Eucharistic wine was the blood of Christ in which He sealed the new dispensation, comparable to the Paschal memorial before Yahweh of the deliverance from Egypt (1 Cor. x. 1-5 ; xi. 26). Again, the Eucharistic bread was likened to the manna in the wilderness, and for the Apostle was none other than Christ Himself (1 Cor. x. 3 f.) ; a figure which may have been suggested by the feeding miracles, if St. Paul was acquainted with

these stories. That the early Church attached considerable importance to those traditions would appear from the fact that they are the only miracles recorded in all four Gospels, and therefore rank with the Passion narratives and the account of the work of the Baptist as the only incidents mentioned by all the Evangelists. Furthermore, bread and fish were prominent ancient Christian symbols, as the catacombs and the Tabgha mosaics reveal.

In the Marcan accounts of the feeding of the multitudes a hidden meaning is suggested by the assertion that the disciples did not understand concerning the loaves till they reviewed the episode in the light of the fuller revelation of later times (vi. 52; viii. 17, 21). Therefore, it would seem that these mysterious feedings were intended to be a "sign" to the faithful like the Eucharist itself, and in the Fourth Gospel they directly lead up to the Eucharistic discourse (St. John vi). There the emphasis is laid on Jesus giving thanks (vi. 23), and the loaves are called *ἄρτος* in the singular, as in 1 Cor. x. 16 f.; xi. 27. As St. Paul condemned the sordid excesses at the Corinthian supper, so the Fourth Evangelist contrasts the barley loaves with the "true bread from heaven," Jesus.

In the primitive Church the feeding miracles were regarded as a foreshadowing of the communion with the Risen Lord, and it is very probable that

the origin of the Eucharist is to be sought in what lies behind them, brought into conjunction with the momentous last gathering in the Upper Room on the eve of the Passion. If He had been in the habit of assembling the apostolic band from time to time to convey to those who were to be His witnesses to the world the inner meaning of His Messianic mission by sacramental signs, as symbolized in the feeding stories, the final banquet was the climax of these rites. As Leitzmann says, "in offering Himself like the Paschal lamb at the last of the solemn banquets with His disciples, Christ in effect said, 'I am the sacrificial victim whose blood is poured out for you—that is, for the believing folk—to seal a new covenant with God, and whose blood is slain for you.'"

Thus, the Eucharist became for the New Israel the divinely appointed means whereby those who accepted the Gospel affirmations entered into sacramental union with God by a common participation in the body and blood of Christ, and had their share in the enactment of the covenant offering, as the drama of redemption, till the goal was reached at the *parousia*. This interpretation of the *opus redemptionis* was a departure equally from the ancient ritual pattern as this survived in the Mystery cults of the Græco-Roman world, and from current Jewish sacrificial worship and Messianic theology.

For St. Paul, who doubtless played a prominent part in developing the sacramentalism of the early Church as a systematized theology, incorporation into the person of Christ through the operation of the divine *pneuma* was the central fact of the redemptive process (Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 12 f.). At baptism the Christian initiate passed from death to life by a mystical experience rather than by means of a magical rite, and as a new creation having attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, he became a member of a spiritual order. In short, for St. Paul union with Christ meant a personal mystical relationship by a conscious act of self-renouncing trust involving death to the old life and a rising again to newness of life and status in Christ. Ritual holiness was excluded because a sacramental initiation into the Christian Mystery was merely the *rite de passage* through which entrance was gained to the higher spiritual life of the "age to come" with all its possibilities of growth in Christ-likeness. The Eucharist was one of the means to this end. But so far from being automatic or magical in its action, those who desecrated the divine gift by unworthy reception ate and drank damnation to themselves, and virtually became guilty of, rather than reconciled by, the offering of the Cross (1 Cor. xi. 27). Therefore, both in its "mytho-

logical" setting and the manner of its operation, the central mystery of Christianity was raised to an ethical and spiritual plane which removed it from the ancient seasonal drama with its crude polytheistic background and mechanistic ritual procedure.

Nevertheless, the structure of the rite remained little changed. At first the Christian liturgy was modelled on the Jewish synagogue pattern up to the dismissal of the catechumens. Thus, it consisted of the reading of lections from the "memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets," and an instruction on these scriptures followed by prayers. Then the Eucharist began as the specifically Christian act of worship. After the "prayer of the faithful," the kiss of peace was given, and the oblation of the bread and wine made. Communion followed, and the rite closed with thanksgiving and the collection of alms. With the building of churches and the transformation of pagan temples for Christian worship, after the emancipation in A.D. 313, liturgical development proceeded apace, though it was not until the eighth century that it reached its climax.

Around the central death and resurrection theme the structure of the rite took shape in conformity with the customary pattern. At first the story of the Passion was recited, doubtless as a preparation

for the re-enactment of the words spoken and the actions performed at the institution of the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup> From this practice, it may be conjectured, the nucleus of the liturgy arose ; viz., the Eucharistic prayer, the breaking of the bread, and the distribution of the Elements. If the *Didache* is any guide (which is by no means certain, as the rite therein described may be an Agape, or love-feast, independent of the Eucharist) it would seem that the prayers followed the form of the Jewish blessings of bread and wine at ceremonial meals (*Kiddûsh* etc.), and these were preceded by a confession of sin. By the middle of the second century, as we learn from Justin Martyr, the kiss of peace had been added, together with a thanksgiving for the creation of the world and the deliverance from sin and redemption through the passion and death of Christ now offered in the manner of an *anamnesis* or sacrificial memorial. But in the ante-Nicene period a great variety of uses existed, though they all appear to have followed the same general sequence of lections, exhortation, prayer, offertory, Eucharistic Prayer of Consecration (containing a reference to creation, redemption and the memorial) and Communion.

<sup>1</sup> The well-articulated structure of the Matthean account of the institution (xxvi. 26-29) is suggestive of its having been adapted for liturgical use before it was incorporated in the Gospels.

With the appearance of "Church Orders," or Service Books, in the latter part of the fourth century, the liturgy began to assume a fixed form, opening with prayers, lessons, litanies and psalms, during which the sacred ministers went to the altar, the elements were carried in by a priest, the sanctuary was censed by the bishop, and the congregation by the priest. The Gospel was read solemnly, the people standing, and the book was censed by the deacon. The sermon, or homily, followed, after which the catechumens and penitents were dismissed with a blessing from the bishop. The Liturgy of the Faithful then began with a deacon's litany, a prayer and the kiss of peace. After the *lavabo* and the offertory, or oblation of the elements, the *Anaphora* opened with the Consecration Prayers introduced by the *Sursum Corda*, said by the bishop who also assisted at the "manual acts" (i.e. the Fraction of the Host and the Commixture of a particle of it with the consecrated species of wine). Communion was first given to the clergy and then to the laity, the service ending with the thanksgiving and prayer of dismissal said by the bishop.

In the developed form of the liturgy the main features of the ritual pattern can be discerned. The most critical events in the life of Christ are solemnly commemorated in a mystical representation of the original sacrifice once made on Calvary,

in a mystery drama to which the initiated are alone admitted, after special preparation involving a fast from midnight, confession and absolution. Before ascending to the heavenly sphere, typified by the raised altar within the sanctuary, the officiants undergo a purification rite—the *confiteor* and the *asperges*. The altar, missal, ministers and congregation are periodically censed, thereby preserving the ancient life-giving ritual wherein incense had a vitalizing potency.<sup>1</sup> In the Eastern rite the Procession survives in the “Grand Entry” at the Offertory, and in other perambulations; e.g. at the singing of the Gospel. In the *Anaphora* the union of the worship on earth with that of “the whole company of heaven” is triumphantly acclaimed, as is the kingship of Christ at the *Benedictus*. The oblation is consecrated in the words of the original institution of the Eucharist, and in the *Canon* a solemn commemoration is made of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of the immolated Victim, symbolized by the *Fractio*, or breaking of the Host, followed by the *Commixtio*, or mingling of the Eucharistic species typifying the death and resurrection mystery.<sup>2</sup> To effect the mystical

<sup>1</sup> Hence its use in the ritual of mummification in Ancient Egypt to give life to the dead.

<sup>2</sup> As the emphasis came to be laid on the death of Christ and the theory of immolation developed, the *Fractio* was elaborated and completely overshadowed the *commixtio*, thereby illustrating the very intimate relation between belief and its ritual expression.



union of the soul with God the divine life is bestowed in Holy Communion as a renewal of spiritual vitality calculated to endure throughout eternity.

As the seasonal drama was the rite upon which the existence of society was thought to depend, so the Eucharistic celebration was regarded as the representation of the saving work of Christ on which the existence of the Church was based. As Prof. Hocart says, "the Mass is a mystery play on the theme: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life!'" The victim is no longer an ageing king or the "young of an ewe slaughtered at the Paschal Feast as the embodiment of some god in order to promote the life of the crops, but a symbol expressing, by what psychologists call condensation, a sum of innocence, purity, gentleness, self-sacrifice, redemption, and divinity which no words could express with such forceful appeal."<sup>1</sup>

There is no question of the repetition in time and space of acts and occurrences which belong to the eternal order of the spiritual world. This is to miss the point of ritual as a concrete expression of reality. The sacrifice of Christ can no more be repeated in the Eucharist than in Jerusalem, but if our Lord was in fact "incarnated once and for all

<sup>1</sup> *Kingship* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 65, 243.

in order to rule over the souls of men,"<sup>1</sup> what He never can repeat He may show forth day by day in a sacred drama and ritual representation. That the ultimate and incomprehensible realities of the spiritual order have been made real and efficacious throughout the ages in this manner is the verdict of history which reveals a continuous and little changed pattern of sacred ideas and actions passed on from one generation to another, and centring in a King who never dies. The Figure is in a constant state of flux and yet it abides, ever becoming more and more the dynamic centre and embodiment of values and qualities essential for the consolidation of society and the eternal well-being of mankind. *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ETHICS AND CONDUCT

A fourth quality common to religion, in addition to revelation, myth and ritual, recurs in a prescribed standard of conduct. Belief in a beneficent Providence carries with it not only the sense of dependence on a supernatural order but also the dependence of man on the society of which he is an integral unit, because all the members of a community share the same common life-principle. This is particularly apparent in primitive states of culture and in theocratic nations like Israel.

#### *Social Sanctions and Taboo*

Religion being essentially practical in its outlook and primarily concerned with urgent problems of everyday life and experience, it performs its functions unlike magic, the sister technique, not only in public but for the public good. For the purpose of exercising supernatural control over the beneficent forces to promote the prosperity of the community as a whole, religion calls upon every individual to do his part as a member of a blood brotherhood in a peculiar relationship with the external source of strength. This usually involves

the correct performance of certain rites calculated to maintain the bond of union. Thus, among the native tribes of Central Australia men of the kangaroo totem repair to a rocky ledge thought to be haunted by the spirits of ancestral kangaroos and open veins in their arms to allow the blood to stream over a stone representing the spot where a celebrated kangaroo was supposed to have gone down into the earth in the Alcheringa, or Dream Time, of long ago. This is done to increase the species by a renewal of life and to consolidate the alliance with the sacred ally. The sacramental meal on the flesh of the animal killed ceremonially for the purpose further strengthens the union both between the totem and the totemite, and all who are mystically allied to the species. The totem is the unifying force in the group, and the totemic ritual is at once the rallying-point and cohesive factor inasmuch as it is directed to one common end: the supply of the tribe with abundance.

To break a taboo, or to fail in some other sacred duty and responsibility on the part of an individual, has a reciprocal effect on the community, so closely united in one fellowship are all the members of a group organized in relation to a supernatural source of strength. Thus, in the Old Testament when the newly-established theocratic nation began its conquest of Palestine, Achan is said to have brought

divine vengeance upon the whole congregation of Israel because he infringed a divine command (Jos. vii.). The incident turned not so much on the theft as on the breaking of a taboo. Jericho was dedicated to Yahweh as the first-fruits of the land of promise, to be offered to Him wholly as a "burnt offering." By taking the spoils Achan committed an offence against society with dire results on the Hebrew forces. Therefore, to remove the guilt not only the actual offender but all his kith and kin had to be utterly destroyed inasmuch as they were sharers in the common life-principle which makes members of a family "one flesh." This sense of common responsibility is very deeply laid in the clan and arises out of the belief in the providential ordering of society, and carries with it a system of sanctions and taboos to regulate public conduct.

On the one hand, positive rites are directed to the maintenance of right relations with the supernatural world, and, on the other hand, they are aimed at preventing disaster by surrounding with negative taboos everything that has any claim to sacredness. Consequently, when the chief or king is the official representative and embodiment of the powers which control human affairs, he is at once sacred in his own person and the ultimate source on earth of the right ordering of society. As the intermediary

between the community and the supernatural order, he is the controller of the tribe or nation since through his offices and administrations the worship is maintained upon which prosperity depends. Moreover, it is his duty to maintain the sanctions and rules of behaviour essential to the continuance of divine favour, the neglect of which is certain to bring calamity upon all concerned ; as in the case of the " sin " of Achan. Therefore, he is responsible for the punishment of those who infringe taboos and are guilty of breaches of discipline calculated to have evil effects on society at large.

As will be shown later, the sin *par excellence* in primitive states of culture is incest<sup>1</sup> ; an offence equal in gravity to the shedding of the blood of a kinsman. Since all members of a clan usually have a common ancestry by virtue of their descent from the same supernatural species or founder, to infringe the sacredness of this mystic bond is to sever relations with the source of the life of the community with the inevitable result—pestilence, drought, failure of the crops, barrenness in man and beast, and many similar evils. Therefore, to sin against a neighbour who is a kinsman is equivalent to sinning against " god " and the whole beneficent order. Consequently, every man is his brother's keeper, and his first public duty is to respect his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 165 ff.



rights as they are recognized and enforced by custom and law. The supernatural sanctions governing the procedure are determined by moral principles in so far as they presuppose "good behaviour," as this is understood within the limit of a given tradition and established order. As it is this spiritual background which determines and maintains the ethical standard, if it be removed moral chaos results unless a new system of values is devised on a transcendental basis.

### *Ritual Holiness*

So long as sacredness is interpreted as a mystic influence transferable from one person or object to another as a kind of contagion or miasma, holiness is mainly a ritual concept. Anything that comes into contact with this potency is thereby rendered sacred and consequently taboo. Hence the multiplicity of restrictions surrounding the occupant of the throne (where the divine kingship is in operation), the priesthood, medicine-men, rain-makers, and indeed any office or work associated with the spirit-world, such as those engaged in tendance on the dead, or women in childbirth, adolescents during initiation ceremonies, the newly-wed, and gatherers of the first-fruits of the crops. Before persons who have contracted pollution in these ways can be restored to normal social intercourse,

they must remove the contagion by mechanical means (ablutions, purgings, blood rites, etc.), lest they infect their fellows, like a leper or a patient suffering from scarlet fever.

To this end various methods are adopted, but all have the same twofold purpose, viz., to prevent those who for public and beneficent reasons are sacred in their own persons, or have become sacred in pursuit of their functions, from being a source of danger to themselves and those who come in contact with them. But when all these precautions have been taken it is all too easy to commit unwittingly some ritual error and infringe some supernatural sanction. The many ills which befall apparently innocent persons, in fact, are explained at this cultural level as a result of some unconscious offence on the part of the individual or the group. Thus, in ancient Babylonia, the Sumerian penitent daily uttered the pathetic protest, "I know not the sin which I have done ; I know not the error which I have committed." Somehow he felt he must have missed the mark and brought down upon himself and his family the wrath of deities ever alert for the slightest infringement of the ritual order.

In the Babylonian public lamentation texts recited at times of calamities, the country is represented as being in a taboo-condition because the gods have forsaken the cities and brought disaster

upon mankind. To restore their beneficence a fast is demanded together with elaborate purificatory ceremonies and appropriate magical lamentations uttered by the king in his official capacity as the all-embracing penitent of the nation. In these texts, and the psalms, hymns, dirges and litanies that were later modelled on them, the faults lamented are almost entirely devoid of an ethical content, and usually the suppliant is quite at a loss to know why the misfortune has come upon him, protesting his innocence of any conscious breaches of the ritual law. In the circumstances the only course open to the "offenders" was to endeavour to "atone" for, or "cover" and "wipe out" the sin by means of cathartic agents, chiefly water and fire, or to drive forth the malevolent influences by some expulsion rite.

### *The Day of Atonement in Israel*

In post-exilic Judaism an annual purification was held at the autumnal equinox, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles, as a solemn act of corporate penitence in order to drive away the evil contracted during the year. The high-priest first offered a bullock as a sin-offering, and then took two goats over which lots were cast. The one selected for Yahweh was killed and its blood, like that of the bullock, was sprinkled on the "mercy seat" in the

holy place, and on the horns of the altar. After these cathartic rites had been duly performed, the other goat was taken on which the lot "for Azazel" had fallen. Laying both his hands upon its head the high-priest confessed over it "all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions, even all their sins." It was then led to the wilderness laden with the evil of the nation to carry its burden to the sin-receiver, Azazel (Lev. xvi.).

The identification of this supernatural being is difficult to determine, especially as the Hebrew spelling of the name has been deliberately changed to avoid mentioning a powerful demon. But whether it was a satyr, a dreaded *se'irim* in the form of a goat-demon haunting waste places (Lev. xvii. 7), or a leader of the "fallen angels" (*nephilim*) responsible for introducing evil into the world (Gen. vi.; Enoch vi. 7; viii. 1; ix. 6; x. 4), its function was the absorption of the sins in a "solitary land" (Lev. xvi. 22 f.) where the demons made their abode. The animal was merely the carrier or vehicle, like the living bird in the purification of the leper (Lev. xiv.; cf. Zech. v. 5-11), to carry away the guilt from the nation and deposit it in the desert. It was not until much later that it was regarded as a sacrificial victim and thrown over a precipice as an act of atonement (*Yoma*, vi.).

The entire setting of the rite is indicative of a

mechanical removal of evil as a material entity or miasma by means of purifying and life-giving agents and ritual actions. As in the case of the Babylonian *Akitu* Festival, the high-priest laid aside his official vestments and washed himself in the holy place. He then revested and came forth to complete the expiation by offering burnt-offerings, having first made atonement for "the holy sanctuary, the tent of meeting and for the altar, for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" by censuring the adytum of the temple and then sprinkling the sanctuary with the blood of the goat on which the lot "for Yahweh" had fallen. The blood made atonement "by reason of the *nephesh*," or soul-substance, therein contained (Lev. xvii. 11; Deut. xii. 23). This was a cathartic action comparable to the removal of evil in Babylonia by means of the "waters of life" in the "Curse of Eridu," or *Siptu*, drawn from Eridu at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates, consecrated for the purpose by Ea who gave his son Marduk power over demons. Therefore, the final carrying away of the taint by the scapegoat in the Hebrew ritual was the climax of a long series of mechanistic purifications, which necessitated the men who had led the animal away and carried the carcasses without the camp being excluded from society till they had washed their clothes and bathed.

Nevertheless, although the Levitical observance was thoroughly primitive in its setting and ceremonial, it became the means of expressing an ethical conception of penitence. That it was instituted by Moses is, of course, quite impossible, since there is no suggestion of its existence in pre-exilic times, leave alone in the days of the desert. Indeed it was apparently unknown to either Ezekiel or Nehemiah who regulated the offerings and fasts without reference to it (Ezek. xlv. 18 ff.; Zech. viii. 19; Neh. vii. 73-viii.). It would seem, therefore, that it was incorporated into the post-exilic calendrical system after Nehemiah had inaugurated the new phase of Judaism at Jerusalem in B.C. 445. Dr. Kennett may be right in thinking that after having reformed the worship of the temple, Nehemiah proceeded to consecrate the altar and newly-appointed priests, in accordance with the ritual described in Leviticus viii. 8 f., concluding the rededication on the tenth day of the seventh month with a solemn act of penitence. In any case, the rite in the form in which it is described in the book of Leviticus is made up of a number of distinct elements combined together as a supposedly Mosaic ordinance to emphasize the post-exilic attitude towards expiation, confession of sins and the efficacy of the sin-offering. Moreover, it has to be remembered that Leviticus is a *rituale* rather than a manual

of devotion like the Psalms, and in such a description the more spiritual aspects of worship would be no more appropriate than in the rubrics of a liturgy.

The fact that the goat was laden with *all* the sins of the nation may indicate that something more was involved than impaired ceremonial holiness, especially as the animal was merely the depositor and the reliever of the guilt it carried away. In the absence of any adequate theory of ethical atonement in Judaism, Yahweh alone could remove the pollution which remained over after the daily sacrifice had done its work of cleansing. This belief lessened the mechanical and unethical interpretation of the Day of Atonement, and the Rabbinical writers were careful to explain that the ritual was only efficacious when it was performed with sincerity of heart and true repentance (*Yoma*, viii. 9). It is forbidden by the Mishna to say, "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement." "For transgressions that are between a man and his fellow the Day of Atonement does not atone, until the man appease his fellow" (*Yoma*, ix.).

### *Rise of the Ethical Conception of Sin*

Behind both the Levitical and Rabbinic doctrine of forgiveness lay the prophetic movement with its ethical conception of sin as a personal responsibility,

an opposition to God's laws, having far-reaching corporate results. The divine covenant can never be broken, and though man may turn aside from Yahweh and stray from His path, God always remains near, forgives iniquity and transgression. Therefore "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Is. lv. 7). Atonement so conceived is an ethical decision on the part of the sinner rather than a gift of divine grace. He must first turn towards God since it is he who has turned away from Him, and nobody can be a substitute for him or atone in any way for him or justify him. But if mediatorial redemption is thereby ruled out, religious and moral conduct is by no means excluded. On the contrary, the Mishnaic doctrine of Atonement demands "good works" which include almsgiving, fasting and other asceticisms, together with the appropriate sin-offerings, and the ethical righteousness insisted upon by the prophets.

The attribute of Yahweh is holiness and by Him actions are weighed. At the original revelation in the desert the realization of non-moral holiness was awakened in the awe-inspiring experience of transcendent majesty—the *mysterium tremendum*, as Otto would say. Never did the God of Israel lose this



quality, but when before the Exile the cultus obscured the demand for right conduct, it was condemned by the leaders of the prophetic movement as a wholly inadequate expression of His will and purposes for the nation. In Judaism the reformed and restored sacrificial system was based on the same moral ideals and theistic principles, both as regards the essential nature of the Deity and man's relation to Him and to the theocracy as a whole. It is this persistent insistence on the ethical character of its God and His righteous judgments and demands, that constitutes the distinguishing feature of Hebrew religion, for while it was by no means the only attempt in antiquity to introduce a moral element into the divine order, in every other case it proved abortive or else it developed into a pantheistic mysticism.

In Babylonia, for reasons explained, the gods and human conduct seldom rose above the level of ritual holiness, and in Ancient Egypt, if the notion of weighing the heart after death in the Hall of the Double Truth was not without its influence on the practice of virtue, the requirements of the Great Judge in the hereafter were not incompatible with the grossest sensuality in this life. Immortality depended upon the efficacy of potent spells and funerary rites rather than on ethical behaviour, which was the concern of neither the gods nor man.

Even the Akhnaton revival made no attempt to deal with the question of sin since the one God manifest in the solar disc really stood outside the sphere of human affairs, like the primitive All-Father.

In Vedic India, on the other hand, Varuna, the universal monarch, was the upholder alike of the natural order and the moral law, who beheld all that was done on earth. He punished wrong-doing, but received the prayers of sinners who sought forgiveness. Nevertheless, the lofty ethical conceptions which collected round him readily assumed a pantheistic guise as a result of his identification with the notion of *rta*, a complex term from the Sanskrit root *r* "to go," "to change," signifying the universal order, cosmic, ritual and moral.<sup>1</sup> As the special guardian and servant of *rta* Varuna controlled the universe and all its operations, and earned the title the "Lord of Law." This had an ethical significance since the world order was represented as essentially righteous, morality being a fundamental principle of the universe sustained by the sacrificial system. But, nevertheless, since the guardian of all cosmic activity was merged in the universal order of which he was but a part as the servant of a higher law outside his control, the conception was monistic rather than monotheistic, like

<sup>1</sup> *Satapatha Brahmana*, IV, i, 4, 1 ff.

the later notion of *karma*. Moreover, it was mainly a ritual holiness that was sought, since the violation of the law of Varuna demanded the utterance of hymns and the offering of sacrifices which were carried to the sky by Agni, the sacred Fire and Lord of the ritual order. Thus, in the *Satapatha Brahmana* it is declared, "Right is the Fire, Truth is yonder Sun ; or rather Right is yonder Sun and Truth is this fire."<sup>1</sup>

It was upon these foundations that Zoroaster endeavoured to build a new ethical monotheism under the inspiration of Ahura Mazda, the Wise and Righteous Lord of Persian theology. This Iranian deity in all probability was a derivative of Asura who may have been identified with Varuna, but for Zoroaster he was essentially personal and holy, knowing the thoughts and actions of men and demanding above all things right conduct and the good life. The law of Truth (*Asha*), to serve which was the one great obligation, was the Avestan counterpart of the Vedic *rta*, but for the Zoroastrians it was the best order or highest righteousness associated with purity and the noblest attributes of Ahura Mazda. This was the only path that led to heaven, and to follow it meant cultivating good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

The righteous man (*ashavan*) must obey this

<sup>1</sup> V. 4. 4. 10.

fundamental law and hate the Lie (*Druj*), the adversary of the moral order and right government of the world. To uphold *Asha* meant to maintain harmony and discipline, truthfulness and beneficence, which collectively made up righteousness, the best of all divine gifts. To stray from this path was to become a servant of the *Druj*, the hostile source of evil, and "choose the worst things," i.e. the opposite to order and discipline. Thus, unrighteousness was made the equivalent of disorder and discord. "I am on the side of those who preserve order, not on that of those who create disorder," is a saying attributed to Ahura Mazda in the *Hom Yasht*. By practising truth man pleases God, and with this virtue goes justice, good government, chastity, compassion, charity, beneficence and ministering to the needs of others, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual.

This lofty ethical creed, though clearly arising out of the Vedic concept of *rta*, escaped the pantheistic trend of Indian monism by making man capable of determining his own destiny by following either "Good Thought" or "the Lie." Evil was not an illusion of phenomenal existence, or the moral order merely an impersonal unconscious process controlling men, gods and nature till "the wheel of the Law," as the Buddhist would say, ceases its wearisome revolutions in the attainment

of the passionless peace of *Nirvana*. In the Avesta evil proceeds from an external source (Angra Mainyu) independent of Ahura Mazda, but despite this dualism, the moral law is revealed by the Good God. Life is a struggle between two forces, and so far from seeking release from existence and the law of *karma*, the righteous man must work out his own salvation under divine guidance and supported by angelic aid, by persevering in well doing and following the way revealed by the Prophet (Zoroaster) who was sent to deliver humanity from the Lie.

Among the sins that must be avoided some are purely ritual in character, and include such acts as not disposing of nail parings, killing an otter or land-frogs, and giving food too hot to a dog, while no expiation is possible for burning or burying a corpse, and eating human or dog flesh. Therefore, despite the ethical advance in Avestan thought, it had only partly emancipated itself from its primitive background, and in Mazdaism it rapidly deteriorated into animistic polytheism. The recent re-discovery of the *Gathas* has now led to attempts to revive the teaching of Zoroaster among the Parsees, but the way of the reformer is hard, especially in a small isolated community.

In China the oriental conception of an ultimate monistic principle found expression in the notion of *Tao* as a changeless Reality from which all

becoming proceeds. Like the *rta*, *tao* is a pantheistic "way" regarded as an impersonal order governing both man and the universe. According to Lao-tze (born c. 604 B.C.) Heaven never strives though it continues to be creative without effort or purpose. The ethical ideal of Taoism was a mystical union with this quietistic source of all life, and in contradistinction to Confucianism it urged detachment from human affairs, "acting without action," in solitude and humility of spirit. This to Confucius seemed idle dreaming, and regarding the course of events as fixed by a pantheistic impersonal cosmic principle, T'ien or Heaven, he made the whole duty of man (*li*) reciprocal propriety—"what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." This he applied to the "five relationships" of the Family and the State (relations of ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger, friend to friend). In this way filial piety and fraternal love became the root of benevolence which Confucius defined as love to all men.

With theism as such Confucius was not concerned. His aim was the renovation of society rather than the regeneration of the individual, and while he advocated conformity to the customary rites, he did so not because of their religious significance but inasmuch as they gave stability to the moral life and the established order. This ethico-political

system was not without its appeal at a time of great intellectual activity, especially as the Chinese were practical rather than speculative, so that moralization was to them more acceptable than metaphysics. Nevertheless, if Taoism and Confucianism were to become popular religions as distinct from philosophies, they must develop a mythology and ritual. But, as in the case of Mazdaism, the original tenets were rapidly obscured when the founders were deified and a cultus established, though Confucian ethical ideals were given permanent form by Mencius. These were enriched by Chinese exponents of Mahayana Buddhism, and ancestor-worship led to the exaltation of filial piety as the chief virtue. But before the present turmoil destroyed traditional ideas and loyalties, the lack of a genuine moral ideal on a religious basis had reacted against social stability in China.

In Greece, to return to the ancient world in the West, a very different attitude prevailed towards the place and function of religion in society. From the Olympian tradition was inherited a crude polytheism in which the gods were merely "chieftains and princes, each with his *comitatus*, or loose following of retainers and minor chieftains," feasting, fighting, marrying, drinking and thwarting one another like royal buccaneers.<sup>1</sup> In the Homeric

<sup>1</sup> G. Murray, *Five Stages in Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 66 ff.

poems the picture of Olympus is that of warring states with a palace surrounded by the domain of lesser kings as vassals whom the chief lord (Zeus) summons to counsels and banquets. A similar political régime occurred among the Mycenæans in the South, but, unlike its northern counterpart, it was apparently peaceful prior to the fall of Knossos in Crete and the spread of Hellenic peoples (Achæans) through Greece and the adjacent islands.

With the fall of the Minoan-Mycenæan civilization, the Dorian invasion and the Ionian infiltration, new gods, such as Apollo at Delphi and Dionysos from Thrace, were introduced in pre-Homeric times. These brought with them new religious values. As the patron of the divine oracle, Apollo became a god of prophecy to whom people resorted from near and far for counsel and advice, and under Delphian influence a sense of duty towards the gods and men was developed. Moreover, this extended to the realms of the dead where the mighty deified heroes dwelt and sent plagues, pestilence and famine till they were appeased by the offerings and games at the dictates of the oracle. Many of the ancestral cults had a social value for the morality of household, clan and city, and, therefore, Delphi was a consolidating force in the maintenance of the constitution and ancestral policy of the State.<sup>1</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (London, 1912), p. 68.



regulated the law of blood-revenge and provided a means of purification from blood-guiltiness, which if not expiated brought disaster upon the community as a whole. Although a ritual device, the practice at least gave a greater respect for human life, and when the oracle lost its political power after the fifth century B.C., it became the instrument for the promotion of higher moral and philosophical thought, and a guide of the intellectual life of Greece.

In the sphere of religion Apollo stood for explicit obedience to the gods in all things as the only way of obtaining peace and security in the midst of stress. Furthermore, ritual holiness gradually gave place in some measure to the demands for a loftier and more ethical purity, as is shown in the well-known story of Glaukos recounted by Herodotus. This man of Sparta (Glaukos) went to Delphi to inquire of Apollo whether he might purloin by a false oath a sum of money he had deposited on trust, but only to receive the reply, "Glaukos, son of Epicydes, thus to prevail by an oath to make a prize of the money is an immediate gain. Swear, for death is the lot even of those who never swear falsely. But Oath hath a nameless son, footless and handless. Swift is he to pursue in vengeance and whelms in destruction all who belong to the race, or the house of the man who is perjured. But men who keep

their oath are rewarded with blessing." Reduced to fear and repentance by these stern words, Glaukos earnestly sought forgiveness but the Pythoness (a Delphian title of Apollo) replied, "to tempt the gods and do evil is one and the same."<sup>1</sup> This utterance represents the height of Greek oracular ethics, declaring that the essence of sin lay in the action of the will, but while it is far removed from Olympian ritual holiness, it falls definitely short of the prophetic standard in Israel. Nevertheless, it shows that in the fifth century the gods were regarded as knowing the hearts of men and judging evil intentions.

It was under the influence of the religion of Delphi that the Hellenized orgiastic worship of Dionysos was stripped of its worst excesses, and prophecy by divination was brought into relation with prophecy by inspiration. In its original Thracian home the Dionysian cultus was characterized by wild music and frantic dances on mountain tops. During these nocturnal revels the votaries, clad in long flowing garments with horns fixed on their heads, and carrying serpents in their hands, tore in pieces a bull or calf, and devoured the flesh raw. In this state of ecstasy, or hieromania (sacred madness), the invisible presence of the god was discerned and the dancers shared in the

<sup>1</sup> Herod. vi. 86.

divine life, i.e. they became "Sabazoi" or "Bacchoi" (god-posessed).

Tumultuous worship of this wild nature was not calculated to appeal to the prosaic Greeks of the Homeric tradition, but ecstasy is infectious, and at a time when new forces and movements were rapidly changing the outlook of the masses in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. the new religious enthusiasm engendered by these frenzies awakened an unearthly longing in the hearts of not a few unmoved by the Olympian theology. But Apollo, himself a member of the Olympian pantheon, though like Dionysos a new-comer on Greek soil, had a cultus in which "the music of the lyre and the spirit of the song" were employed. In contrast to the Thracian nocturnal orgies, however, it brought "into men's hearts the peaceful law-abiding temper."<sup>1</sup> The one was the music that produced the madness of ecstasy; the other the music that tranquillized the mind and ennobled the spirit, but both were regarded as manifestations of the divine power whereby, according to Plato and Aristotle, certain ethical and psychical moods in man were produced.<sup>2</sup>

It was when the two cults which impressed most strongly the religious feeling of the age were brought together at Delphi that the wild excesses

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, *Pythians*, V. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Republic*, 399.

of the Dionysiac were modified and made subservient to the more sober religious spirit of Greece. The two cults were too radically different in origin and outlook ever to merge, but both types of worship underwent considerable change. During the three winter months the dithyramb of the Hellenized Dionysos was sung while the Thyiades roamed among the mountains in the snow with their torches and swinging thyrsi, but if the ecstatic nocturnal revels continued, and their fervour influenced even the oracular rites, when the "Lord of Delphi" returned in the spring, the abandonment was moderated and confined to properly elected initiates. Furthermore, when the Dionysiac spread to Athens and the centres ruled over by the Delphic Apollo, hardly a trace of the old Thracian orgiastic worship remained.

It was this movement which, as Rhode says, "planted the seed of mysticism in the very heart of Greek religion."<sup>1</sup> If the Delphic oracle was largely responsible for the spread of the new cultus, the part played by Orphism was also very considerable. Orpheus, the traditional founder of this species of Bacchic worship, was regarded as the son of one of the Muses who became a devoted follower of Dionysos. But though from the time of Herodotus the Orphic faith was Bacchic, its hero (Orpheus) at

<sup>1</sup> *Psyche* (London, 1925), p. 291.

one time seems to have been a bitter opponent of Dionysos, by whose order he was torn to pieces because he gave allegiance to Apollo, whom he identified with the Sun-god, as the greatest of deities. This legend doubtless reflects a former rivalry between the two cults, and Orpheus reveals many Apolline traits as the comely youthful musician with his golden lyre (Apollo's instrument) charming wild animals and birds with his magic strains. It would seem, in short, that he was a syncretistic figure introduced into the Dionysiac under the influence of Delphi.

Once this union was achieved, the way was opened for the story of the death of Orpheus in a Bacchic orgy to be equated with the rending of Dionysos by the Titans, and of his Thraco-Phrygian counterpart Zagreus in animal form, by his worshippers. But Orpheus was the reformer rather than the founder of the Dionysiac. Thus, in its Orphic guise the composite legend became virtually a mythological interpretation of "original sin," since the wicked Titans were represented as getting Dionysos into their power when he had transformed himself into a bull. In this manifestation he was torn to pieces and devoured, as in the primitive *omophagia*. His heart, however, was saved by Athena and given to Zeus who swallowed it and slew the Titans with his thunderbolt. From their

ashes he created the human race, which in this way acquired a dual nature. As the Titans had eaten Dionysos-Zagreus man was partly divine, but he also contained within him the evil he inherited from his Titanic ancestry.

This story constituted the background of the Orphic mystery. In order to eliminate the Titan element (i.e. the evil nature associated with the physical body) and so enable the Dionysian part to seek divine union, initiation into the brotherhoods was necessary. In its upward path towards freedom, the soul was destined to pass through a series of bodies, both human and animal, till at length escape from the cycle of rebirth was secured by the "releasing grace" of Orpheus. While the Orphic rule of life was largely ceremonial, involving, for instance, abstinence from beans and fresh eggs, and contact with corpses and pregnant women, loftier virtues were also inculcated and fostered by a belief in rewards and punishments after death. "They who are righteous beneath the rays of the sun, when they die have a gentler lot in a fair meadow by deep-flowing Acheron. . . . But they who have worked wrong and insolence beneath the rays of the sun are led down beneath the watery plain of Cocytus into chill Tartarus." In this state of purgation and retribution the soul awaited its rebirth, and the

manner of the re-incarnation was determined by the deeds performed in its former life. The fact that man was by origin half-divine rendered him capable of entering into communion with God in his earthly existence, despite his evil nature, and he had before him the hope and inspiration of ultimately attaining complete fellowship with the Deity for ever when at last the emancipated soul became Bacchus.

In this craving for personal salvation, however primitive may have been the mythological setting of Orphism, and ritualistic the methods adopted by initiates, we encounter the first attempt to introduce in the higher religions of the West a moralization of the hereafter. The daily struggle between good and evil was reflected in the story of the Titans, and the endeavour to escape from the lower nature found expression in the adoption of an ascetic way of life re-enforced by divine grace and strength mediated through Orpheus. It was recognized that a fundamental "change of heart" was essential if the curse was to be removed, and the soul transformed into the true image of Dionysos. Again, this life seemed too short to accomplish the task, and therefore the progress attained here must be continued and carried forward into the next phase of existence. At length the vicious circle of re-incarnation and transmigration was broken, and

release from the bondage of corruption secured, though the blessed life in the hereafter seems to have been in the nature of a "carousal," an eternal intoxication.

The sectarianism of Orphism tended to confine these benefits to the initiated, and opened the way for the taunt of the Cynic Diogenes who declared that the robber Pataikon, because he was initiated, would fare better after death than Epaminondas, an uninitiated just man. But if the ethical idea of good and evil arose only by slow degrees out of primitive conceptions of ritual purification, the Mysteries flourished because there was "a brooding consciousness of failure," as Angus says, "of the futility of human effort, of the load of human sin, the ineluctability of penalty of gods estranged, and the need of reconciliation and purification."<sup>1</sup> Gradually to the ritual prescriptions were added ethical concepts of a pious life as a qualification of those who would attain a blessed hereafter, and in this transition the Orphic literature, which took shape in the sixth century at a time of widespread social unrest and spiritual upheaval, was an important factor.

Thus, the Pythagoreans adopted the theory of transmigration and practised asceticisms similar to those employed in the brotherhoods. Pindar was

<sup>1</sup> *The Mystery Religions and Christianity* (London, 1925), p. 206.



influenced by the literature, though for initiation he substituted righteous conduct as the essential qualification for true happiness. Plato adopted the Orphic doctrine of retributive justice extending beyond the grave and in successive lives of the soul, though he viewed with abhorrence the cruder notions of the Mystery. Orphism, however, failed to capture Greece, and, unlike its oriental counterpart, Buddhism, it degenerated into an obscure sect because it was alien to the Greek religious temperament.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Christian Ethic*

Christianity, on the other hand, succeeded where its predecessors failed because in contrast to the Mysteries it demanded a whole-hearted surrender of the entire personality, body, soul and spirit, to a new way of life which endured beyond the passing conditions of time and space. Judaism was ethical in its outlook and demands, but apart from its nationalistic limitations, it was primarily the observance of a divinely ordained law. It had little to offer to the sinner as a means of expiation, and no gift of grace to enable struggling humanity to fulfil its mission in this world or the next. In Christianity the "new and living way" to the "power of an endless life" was a state of salvation here and now

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford, 1933), p. 31.

involving death unto sin and a daily "crucifying of the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof." It was not contended, as among the Orphics, that the body is essentially evil. On the contrary, for St. Paul it was "the temple of the Holy Spirit" capable of being made a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (1 Cor. vi. 19; Rom. xii. 1). If the flesh, as distinct from the body, is a lower element in human nature, it is neutral rather than inherently sinful. It has to be kept in subjection in order that it may not hamper the spirit in its upward path.

From Judaism the Apostle had inherited the belief in the dualism of the flesh (σάρξ) and the spirit (πνεῦμα), as constituting personality, but the sharp distinction he draws between the "carnally-minded" and the "spiritually-minded" is suggestive of Greek influence, though he rejects the Orphic-Platonic doctrine of an immortal spirit imprisoned in a mortal hindering body. By making a subtle distinction between the psyche and the animating principle (πνεῦμα), as the higher spiritual life, he develops a theory of the resurrection of the body as distinct from the immortality of the soul. It is not the mind (νοῦς) as a divine principle of pure intelligence that survives the dissolution and becomes absorbed into the Ultimate Mind, as the Platonists held, nor the resuscitation of the mortal remains, as the apocalyptic school of Judaism sup-

posed. In the hereafter the soul must be clothed upon with a glorified body "not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1-10; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 44). And even in this life the body is an "instrument of righteousness" when it is made subservient to the interests of the spirit. Asceticism is merely a means to this end, not in itself a way of salvation, as in the Mysteries and other systems of ritual holiness. In Jewish Rabbinical theology, the "evil imagination" (*yetser ha-ra'*) is not wholly malicious, and can be used for beneficent ends, such as the propagation of the race, and overruled by God for the furtherance of His divine purposes, but unlike St. Paul, the Jews placed the seat of the evil imagination in the will and mind.

By making virtue the fruits of the spirit, and sin the works of the flesh, some measure of self-discipline was an essential requirement of the Christian way of life, as indeed it was of the Hellenic philosophic tradition, apart from the ritual austerities of Orphism and Pythagoreanism. But in Christianity it was a positive rather than a negative ideal directed towards the life of the spirit. Thus, in the second century A.D., Justin Martyr described in the following terms the moral demands made upon pagan converts to the Faith. "We who formerly rejoiced in uncleanness of life and now love chastity; we who also used magic arts and have

now dedicated ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who loved resources of money and possessions more than anything, and now actually share what we have and give to every one who is in need; we who hated one another and killed one another and would not eat with those of other race, and now since the manifestation of Christ have a common life and pray for our enemies and try to win over those who hate us without just cause.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, in pagan society there was an ethical standard in philosophic circles at the beginning of the Christian era which inculcated sexual purity, the disciplined life and the universal brotherhood of mankind. Thus, the Stoics, for example, enthroned duty in its highest place, and put a supreme value on character. A system, however, that made man his own saviour, and the end of virtuous living simply an approving conscience and self-complacency, was bound to become a philosophy of despair. True, Stoicism had noble adherents like Marcus Aurelius, but it failed to be a converting force because it could not provide the necessary dynamic of right living. “Show me a Stoic if you know one,” said Epictetus. “You will show me thousands who speak like Stoics. Show me at least some one who shows promise of realising this ideal. Let my old age gaze on what

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.* I, chap. xiv.

so far it has never been my lot to know. Show me one at least. You cannot."

The Isis Mysteries in their Græco-Roman form made a greater appeal to the masses, and in the vivid description of the initiation of one Lucius given by Apuleius in the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, written in the days of Marcus Aurelius, a genuine religious experience is recorded far removed from ritual holiness and cathartic purification. By subduing the flesh the initiate had gained clearer spiritual perceptions, and "by the innocence and constance of his former life" he had won "a noble inheritance from heaven" enabling him to be "reborn and forthwith devoted to the service of the sacred rites" prior to his final glory in the Elysian Fields. Those who were invited to "sup at the couch of the Lord Serapis" found behind all the ceremonial observances a deeper meaning which enabled them to gain renewal of strength from the goddess in this life, and in the world to come everlasting bliss through the immortal glory of Osiris.

More than any other cult in the pagan world these Mysteries unquestionably met a very real spiritual need and had a profound influence on the conduct of the initiates, though, like the Eleusinian and Orphic religions, they were unable to free themselves from their polytheistic origins. Their

appeal, therefore, was essentially emotional and their asceticisms were mainly negative in their aims and demands. The Isiac encouraged sexual discipline, especially among the many women who derived inspiration from the goddess, and Mithraism enabled men, particularly the soldiers who flocked into the sect in the second and third centuries A.D., to find strength to fight victoriously not only on the field of battle but also against their own passions and temptations. But nowhere in the theology of the Mysteries, or the speculations of philosophy, was divine self-sacrifice displayed and made the central fact of the redemption process, as in the Christian Gospel expounded and made articulate in the faith and practice of the Church. Christianity prevailed because it offered a different way of salvation and moral ideal.

As Dr. Nock says, Christ made His way in the Roman world because He was represented to be the redeemer of mankind, vindicated by the miracle of the Resurrection. "He is a saviour rather than a pattern, and the Christian way of life is something made possible by Christ the Lord through the community rather than something arising from the imitation of Jesus."<sup>1</sup> It was the raising of humanity to God, not seeing what God is like in the face of Jesus Christ, that gave the new faith its hold on

<sup>1</sup> *Conversion*, p. 210.

the Gentile world. Therefore, it became a social phenomenon uniting the existing sacramentalism and philosophy in a scheme which was at once soul-satisfying and intellectually comprehensible to thinking folk. Thus, it became the consolidating force at a time when all things were falling into decay, largely as a result of moral degeneration, and because it was based on certain fundamental ethical principles it influenced conduct accordingly. If the moral standard in many respects was not so very different from that of the best elements in paganism, it supplied divine aid in the attainment of its ideals in a measure not available elsewhere. Consequently, it became a power for righteousness as well as a way of salvation.

The manner in which this has found expression in the life of the community and of the individual is part of the problem with which we are here concerned. "Piety, like art, or science, or any other activity of life," as Professor A. E. Taylor points out, "is an affair of the community, as well as of the individual," and can only be sustained by an organized effort on the part of the society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> The Church was composed of personalities who had made a fresh start through redemptive grace, and accepted a faith which henceforth was to be the guiding principle of their lives, but

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith of a Moralist* (London, 1930), vol. II, p. 19.

it was the new relationship with God in a world-wide community rather than the ethical teaching of the Founder that made them what they were and hoped to become. While each soul was personally responsible for his conduct, and eventually would be judged according to his works, he was saved and maintained in a state of salvation as a member of a new humanity, for only as such could he participate in the "life of the world to come" as a present and eternal reality. In short, he belonged body and soul to a corporate society ultimately to be made perfect which was itself committed to certain affirmations, theological and ethical, as its basic assumptions, and entrusted with a commission to the whole world (Ephes. i. 10). Therefore, something infinitely more than individual good and personal holiness must always be the ultimate aim of the Christian life, however vital these may be to the soul's eternal well-being. The source of moral endeavour in Christianity is God, as indeed in all genuinely theistic faiths, and it is this belief which determines conduct. Man is what he is very largely as a result of his inner spiritual background. If the Reality behind phenomena be spirit and essentially ethical, and this is manifest in man, made in the likeness of his Creator, human conduct becomes judged by the standard and criterion of the Supreme Spirit. For Christians the final revelation



of the character of God has been made in Christ, and in the Divine Society established to complete His work on earth the full riches of His life and grace may be received. Thus the potentialities of the human spirit may become actual, and life fashioned accordingly.

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## CHAPTER V

### MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Having determined the theological and ethical foundations of society we are now in a position to examine the social structure which has been raised upon them in the light of the foregoing evidence and the conclusions we have deduced from it. The belief in Providence carries with it a religious system of values regarding the existence of a spiritual and moral order, and a technique for its expression, which constitute the unifying principle and cohesive force of communal life wherever these sanctions obtain. They may be true or false, but their cultural function is independent of their validity, however important this latter quality may be for the ordering of society on the best and surest foundations. When a living faith in the ultimate meanings of life breaks down, the body politic loses its cohesion and the process of disintegration inevitably follows as in the Roman world in the period of its decline.

#### *Primitive Promiscuity*

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the social organization centred in the family as the primary

unit of society. In the closing years of the last century it was widely held that originally human groups consisted of an undivided commune in which unrestricted sexual relations obtained till in process of time the institution of marriage and the patriarchal family were established as a result of the development of private property. This hypothesis, based mainly on the findings of Morgan, McLennan, Bachofen, and Lubbock, was eagerly adopted by the Marxian Communists in support of their theories of common ownership and economic determinism, and more recently it has been revived by Dr. Briffault in his attempt to show that all social groups are primarily reproductive groups derived from the maternal instinct.<sup>1</sup>

According to Briffault, who may be taken as the modern exponent of an outworn thesis, the human race was promiscuous in the beginning inasmuch as the family consisted merely of a woman and her offspring. Thus, at first the social unit was a communistic maternal horde devoid of any sexual or economic restrictions or regulations. To maintain and reinforce matriarchy the practice of exogamy was adopted to compel the sons of the primeval mothers to seek sex mates outside the groups in which they were born and nurtured. "The regulation of collective sexual relations between

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mothers* (London, 1927).

given groups has everywhere preceded any regulation of those relations between individual members of those groups," and "in their origin marriage regulations had no reference to such individual relations, but to relations between groups."<sup>1</sup> With the acquisition of property, instead of service being the basis of these matrilineal unions, a dowry was substituted which brought into being patrilineal marriage. The maternal horde thereupon disintegrated into families and society was established on a patriarchal basis.

In support of the theory of primitive promiscuity such practices as "group-marriage," pre-nuptial licence and extra-marital relations have been cited as survivals of a former state of society in which marriage and the family were unknown. But neither Dr. Briffault nor his predecessors have been able to show that where these customs obtain they constitute an undivided promiscuous community. On the contrary, they occur as part of a complex system of social organization in which marriage is the normal and established institution, strictly enforced within a given sphere of relationships. By group-marriage is meant that a certain group of men are married to a specific group of women, as among the ancient Britons who are said to have had "a form of community of wives, ten or twelve

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 766, 607.

combining in a group, especially brothers and fathers with sons.”<sup>1</sup> This appears to be a peculiar feature of polyandrous people where the union of several husbands with one wife prevails. But even in this restricted type of organization it is the exception rather than the rule, since the tendency is to confine the group to a paternal brotherhood of men united by the closest ties of blood. Furthermore, the first husband enjoys conjugal rights superior to the others, so that the wife usually has only one husband in the full sense of the term.

Similarly, where supplementary unions are permitted, great care is taken to regulate relationships within a marital system. Thus, for instance, in the case of the Dieri in South-east Australia, which has often been quoted as an example of a promiscuous society, the tribe is divided into two groups, or moieties, on a totemic basis. The men are not only restricted in their choice of partners from the section opposite to their own, but to a certain group of women who are born into the relation of *Noa* (i.e. spouseship) to them. Consequently the group of marriageable men and the corresponding group of women are *Noa-mara*, or potential spouses, to each other.

The *Noa* relationship becomes specialized by the betrothal of two children in infancy or childhood by

<sup>1</sup> Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, V, 14.

arrangement with the respective mothers and with the concurrence of the brothers of the mother of the girl. The new relationship thus created between them is called *Tippa-malku* and is symbolized by tying together the navel-strings of the two children with emu feathers, or by similar rites. Since no woman can become *Tippa-malku* to more than one man at the same time, this is an individual marriage, though it does not prevent her contracting supplementary unions as a *Pirrauru* wife to other men, provided they are *Noa* to her. According to Dr. Howitt, from whom our information on this practice is derived,<sup>1</sup> "a *Pirrauru* is always a 'wife's sister,' or a 'brother's wife,' and the relationship arises through the exchange by brothers of their wives. When two brothers are married to two sisters, they commonly live together in a group-marriage of four. When a man becomes a widower he has his brother's wife as *Pirrauru*, making presents to his brother. A man being a visitor, and being of the proper class, is offered his host's *Tippa-malku* wife as a temporary *Pirrauru*, that is, if he is *Noa* to her." Thus, a man may have several *Pirrauru* wives and a woman may have several *Pirrauru* husbands, but no woman can have more than one *Tippa-malku* husband simultaneously, though a man may have more than one *Tippa-malku* wife.

<sup>1</sup> *Native Tribes of South-east Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 177 ff.

Loose as this system may be, it certainly does not constitute promiscuity. The family unit is that of the *Tippa-malku* husband and his wife, and only when the two individuals are separated by death or distance is the wider *Pirrauru* relationship permitted. Moreover, this extension of marital rights is only allowed within the "family circle" of the spouse-ship. The same is true in Melanesia<sup>1</sup> of the sexual relations between groups of men formed by the husband's brothers and the group of women making up the wife's sisters. Here, again, it is a case of marriage within a conventional brotherhood rather than a relic of promiscuity.

The other examples of group-marriage quoted by Dr. Briffault are equally incapable of interpretation in terms of sexual communism, and as Professor Malinowski has shown in his study of *The Family among the Australian Aborigines*, so firmly rooted is individual marriage in the region that there are no less than forty-nine methods of obtaining wives in vogue among the natives. The modes adopted may be often simple and haphazard, as in the exchange of a wife for a sister, or marriage by capture, but even in elopements certain rites and formalities have to be observed. Furthermore, the choice of a partner is always governed by the elaborate exoga-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 473.



mous classificatory system designed to prevent the sin of sins in primitive society, viz. incest.

### *Incest*

When members of a clan are believed to have the same ancestry derived from a common supernatural source, *ex hypothesi* they are all one flesh and one blood. To infringe the rules of marital relationships within the kin is the equivalent of an offence against the sacred blood which constitutes the mystic bond binding together all the members of the community. To break an incest taboo, therefore, belongs to the same category as the shedding of the blood of a kinsman, and is calculated to have far-reaching effects on society as a whole. Hence the complex system of prohibited degrees which is a characteristic feature in all primitive communities and represents a permanent element in social organization in all states of culture.

According to Dr. Briffault, the prohibition in the first instance applied primarily to brothers and sisters, and was conditioned by the jealousy of the primeval mothers. In the original matriarchal horde the rule of exogamy was an essential condition of the preservation of the maternal character of the group. "If the women left their family to join their husbands, that family would cease to be a maternal group; if the men were the sexual mates

as well as the brothers of the women, patriarchal succession would be established, and their authority and rivalry would bring about patriarchal dominance also." The men, not being essential to the maintenance of the group, could leave it without let or hindrance, but the girls and women as the stable social unit had to be retained. Consequently, they were compelled to find sex mates among the males from the neighbouring tribes who entered their group, since brother and sister unions were forbidden. Moreover, the transference of the affection of the sons from their mother to another woman aroused her jealousy, and to escape from maternal anger they sought safety in flight,<sup>1</sup> though actually, on this hypothesis, apart from the wrath of a despotic mother, this was the only course open to them in the circumstances if they were to obtain a sexual partner.

Freud, on the other hand, makes the jealousy of the father the originating cause of exogamy. Adopting the conjecture of Darwin and J. J. Atkinson that in the beginning man lived in small family groups like the gorilla consisting of an adult male with a number of females and their offspring, he argues that the sons were expelled on reaching adolescence to enable the father to keep all the women for himself. One day, however, "the ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 250 ff.

pelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde." By this cannibalistic act they identified themselves with the Sire whom they envied, feared and loved, and imbibed his strength. Having satisfied their hate a sense of guilt arose, and as a result they renounced the fruits of their deed by denying themselves the liberated women they had sought to obtain by this dastardly crime, thereby at the same time removing the rivalry among themselves for the possession of the females. Thus, by inventing the incest taboo they "saved the organisation which had made them strong and which could be based upon the homosexual feelings and activities which probably manifested themselves among them during the time of their banishment."<sup>1</sup> But though the custom of exogamy prevented internecine strife which would have ultimately destroyed the human race at the threshold of its existence, the primeval parricide has left the Œdipus Complex as a permanent heritage in the suppressed desire in every man to kill his father and marry his mother.

This ingenious explanation of the universal prohibition of incest as the repression of a natural instinct in favour of it, takes no account of the relation between father and daughter, and, therefore, is inadequate apart from the very precarious founda-

<sup>1</sup> *Totem and Taboo* (London, 1919).

tions on which it is based. It is true that the social unit of the anthropoids is a family of male and female and their young, often living together in groups as a herd. There also appears to be a tendency to drive off the males as they grow up, while the old male sometimes ends his days in solitude. But no human or pre-human group is known in which a "dislocation in the family life of the primitive horde" as a result of the sons slaying their father to secure the women has actually occurred. If a "father horde" in contrast to a "son horde" of expelled bachelors ever existed, at least no traces of such a state of tension have survived outside the subconscious levels of the human mind where Freudians claim to find the data firmly established. This, however, is a question for psychologists to determine, and at present expert opinion is as sharply divided as are the two hordes in the theory. But since Freud's interpretation of the incest taboo presupposes that "totemism has regularly formed a phase in every culture," since the totem animal is the substitute for the slain father, the hypothesis is based on a localized and specialized institution which in the light of the anthropological evidence cannot be assigned to the earliest stratum of human culture.

Again, the psychological conditions associated with the Œdipus Complex are connected with

father-right, and while Dr. Briffault has over-emphasized the part played by the maternal instinct, the fact remains that the mother was and is the reproductive centre of the family responsible for the birth and nurture of the new generation. The alleged ignorance of the physiological function of paternity among primitive people has doubtless been exaggerated, but, nevertheless, it is commonly supposed in Australia, for example, that a woman conceives by a spirit-child entering her at a sacred spot where she first becomes conscious of pregnancy or quickening. The infant, therefore, is regarded when born as the reincarnation of one of the ancestors associated with the place.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Melanesians think that sexual intercourse is a means of opening the way for spirits to enter a woman in order to produce a child. Pregnancy, therefore, is independent of the fertilizing agency of the male once the entrance has been unbarred, the husband being regarded more in the light of a guardian of the child when born than as its progenitor. Paternal authority is exercised by the maternal uncle and kinship is strictly matrilineal.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the repression of sexual and aggressive tendencies relates to the sister and mother's brother respectively, instead

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 150, 606.

<sup>2</sup> Malinowski, *The Father in Primitive Psychology* (London, 1927), pp. 28 ff., 43 ff.

of to the mother and the father, as in the Œdipus Complex.

In the matriarchal system the conflict with regard to the mother is to some extent exchanged for a similar conflict towards the sister, for while the sister is surrounded by the strictest taboos, a man in the capacity of *potestas* has a definite responsibility for her well-being as well as for that of her children. The presence of two separate authorities in the same household—the father and uncle—tends to produce divided loyalties in the family, while the theory of generation makes for general laxity in the matter of pre-nuptial chastity, “fatherless children” being as prevalent as virgins are rare, though actually the number of illegitimate births is small. These practices, however, are not relics of a primeval sexual communism, as has been contended, but the result of a confusion between the origin of the body and the soul. Thus, even in classical times and during the Middle Ages, there was much curious speculation concerning the relation of parenthood and the ingress of the incarnated spirit in the human body.<sup>1</sup>

If the infant is a denizen from another sphere, a reincarnation of the spirit of an ancestor, or a dualism composed of a mortal body enshrining an

<sup>1</sup> Æschylus, *Eumenides*, 658 ff.; cf. C. Singer, *From Magic to Science* (London, 1928), p. 222.

immortal rational soul produced by special creation when the organism is sufficiently developed to receive it, something more than human paternity may seem to be required to explain its genesis. Hence the introduction of spiritual agencies either to the exclusion of the physiological process altogether, or, as is more usual, to supplement it where it fails to afford an adequate interpretation of all the sources of the new life. When the infant is regarded as a reincarnation, or spirit-child, emanating from the never-dying spirit of the ancestral stock, its entry into women of the proper totem at a given sacred spot is independent of human generation, though not necessarily to the exclusion of some causal connexion between sexual intercourse and childbirth as a preparation of the mother for the reception of the embryo.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise the whole process of procreation would not be reproduced in pantomime on occasions.

Nevertheless, in states of culture where pre-nuptial licence is as prevalent as embryological knowledge is absent, the physiological causes of birth are inevitably obscure. Consequently, supernatural explanations are sought for a very imperfectly understood sequence of events. The one

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 263; H. Basedow, *The Australian Aboriginal* (London, 1925), pp. 284 ff.; Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (London, 1929), pp. 146 ff.

thing, however, that is beyond any possibility of doubt is the obvious fact that a child is the offspring of his mother. Therefore, around her has collected all the mysterious forces associated with the entry into the world of a new member of the community as an individual unit of the family. From the early stages of pregnancy till the time that the child is weaned, she is subjected to taboos to prevent supernaturally dangerous contacts, which sometimes, it is true, extend to the father, where the custom of the *convade*, or seclusion of the husband at the time of the birth, is practised. But mother and child are the principal actors in the domestic drama, and in matrilineal society, descent is reckoned through her line. As the self-sufficing source of human life and the reproductive centre of the family, an inherent sanctity was attached to her blood, so that it became a natural symbol of the collective life of the group.

What binds children to their mother is the fact that they are in a peculiar sense flesh of her flesh and blood of her blood. It is this common blood-bond of mother and child which doubtless in great measure accounts for the alleged deep-seated opposition to the father as the begetter, and gives mother-right a claim to priority over father-right in the history of the organization of society. It is natural for the wife and mother to assign more importance to supposed connexions by blood than to



those with her husband and the father of her children. She is primarily a member of her own kin, and where the custom obtains of the woman living permanently with her relatives, the husband is merely an alien visitor. Under matrilocal conditions the father has little if any authority over the children, and, in fact, tends to be regarded as an intruder from outside the real family circle. Conversely, when the continuity of the family finds expression in the procreative functions of the father, it is in the man rather than in the woman that the family is perpetuated. Consequently, by marriage the wife passes from her own kin into that of her husband, or, as in Ancient Rome, from the *potestas* of her father into that of her husband.

In the *Eumenides* of Æschylus the conflict between these two types of society is demonstrated. While the goddesses appeal to the tie of blood that links son and mother, Apollo makes the man the begetter (τοκεύς) and the mother merely the nurse and caretaker of the seed committed to her. In short, under matriarchal conditions the blood is the decisive factor, making the wife nearer to her own kin than to that of the husband, and the children to their mother than to their father. In patriarchal society, the procreative function of the male as the begetter is emphasized and the family organized on this basis. But in both systems marriage is essen-

tially a sacred institution and the starting-point of social organization ; the cradle of nascent culture.

### *The Institution of Marriage*

The peculiar sanctity which has always been associated with the mysterious physiological functions and attributes of womanhood, maternity and procreation is illustrated by nuptial rites and observances as the appointed methods of initiation into the "holy estate of matrimony." Even where intercourse between the sexes is as common as eating, sleeping and talking, marital relations are always placed on a different level inasmuch as they are directed to a specific end, namely, the foundation of the family. Everywhere marriage is regulated by custom and law, and may not be "taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly." Granting that the supernatural danger attached to defloration, so persistently argued by A. E. Crawley,<sup>1</sup> has been exaggerated in view of the prevalence of pre-nuptial licence in many communities, marriage is nevertheless a taboo-state in which the consummation of the union is thought to be attended by supernatural perils. To ward off evil influences and secure a "blessing" on the new family about to be created, elaborate installation ceremonial marks

<sup>1</sup> *The Mystic Rose* (New Edition by T. Besterman, London, 1932), pp. 311 ff.

this rise in social status on the part of the two contracting parties. The fertility of the bride has to be assisted by offerings of grain, rice, fruit, nuts and similar life-giving agents, and security from malign influences effected by veiling, ablutions, disguises and asceticisms, while to establish and strengthen the bond the hands of man and wife are joined, knots are tied, garments and even blood may be exchanged, and a meal eaten together. In such ways as these the significance of marriage as a holy estate and therefore a religious institution is demonstrated, every stage of parentage from conception to the initiation of the offspring being marked by sacred rites.

This consecration of the process of sexual selection in an individualized family by means of a sacramental approach to the mysterious functions of woman as wife and mother, demands an organization of society in such a manner as to avoid rivalry and friction. This has found expression in a complex classificatory system having as its purpose the prevention of incest as a disturbing factor in family life. To this end sexual relations between house-mates and those near of kin have been rendered absolutely taboo by powerful supernatural sanctions directed in the first instance to relationships which would become disturbing elements in the home. Thus, parent and child marriage is

universally forbidden in all states of culture, as such union would be destructive alike of a properly ordered family life and parental authority. Again, except in the case of royal families where the theory of the divine kingship necessitates in-breeding, brothers and sisters usually are not allowed to marry unless they are children of one father by different mothers. For the rest, prohibited degrees tend to be more stringent where maternal relationships are involved, as a result doubtless of the original peculiar sanctity of the blood of the mother. Thus, when marriage with a half-sister has been permitted, as in Athenian Law, the contracting parties nearly always have had the same father but different mothers. In polygynous families each wife and her children constitute separate groups and so become inter-marriageable without fear of incest. To avoid the domestic complications which inevitably would arise if mother and daughter were to seek a common partner, the mother-in-law, although she stands outside the maternal kinship group, has been the object of one of the strictest taboos.

Outside this inner circle of consanguineous relationships there is a larger ring of prohibited degrees covering either persons who inhabit the same house or homestead, or who are members of the same clan united in a sacred alliance by descent

from a common ancestor or supernatural ally. Furthermore, in the interests of social solidarity, it is highly desirable not only that unions should be contracted outside the kin, but among persons of the same generation. Therefore, it is generally agreed that a man may not marry his grandmother, though there are frequent exceptions to the rule governing the alliance of uncle and niece. Aunt and nephew marriage is rare, but that between cousins is common among Mohammedans, Jews and Hindus because it strengthens the kinship tie. When it is not allowed by the rule of clan exogamy, the most proper marriage may be between a man and his father's sister's daughter, or his mother's brother's daughter (i.e. cross-cousins: the children of brother and sister). This custom may have arisen through the desire of the father that his son should acquire his property by marrying a woman who would be one of his heirs under a condition of mother-right. Conversely, with the adoption of patrilineal descent, the levirate and sororate (i.e. marrying a dead brother's widow or a dead—or living—wife's sister) was a device whereby the solidarity, continuity and inheritance of the family were retained. In the absence of offspring by one marriage there was always a chance that a brother might raise up seed to the deceased and so conserve the property in the family.

If it be granted that the earliest kins were at once matrilineal and matrilocal based on blood-relationship and blood-taboo in relation to the mother, a reason is to hand for the survival of prohibited degrees under patriarchal conditions which seem to suggest a matriarchal organization of society. Thus, for example, in the Old Testament despite the fact that descent among the Hebrews was reckoned exclusively in the male line, as among the rest of the Semites, the mother apparently retained the right of naming her children until the eighth century B.C., and Genesis ii. 24 suggests that the husband was adopted into the wife's kin, or at any rate lived with her people. Again, Samson is said to have visited from time to time in her own clan the Timnite woman with whom he had contracted an alliance (Judges xiv., xv. 1-6), while Zipporah appears to have lived in her own country (Ex. xviii. 2-6). Abraham married his half-sister, Sarah, the daughter of the same father but of a different mother, as in matriarchal society, and the Amnon-Tamar incident is a possible indication of the same practice (2 Sam. xiii.). Again, Rebekah is represented as returning with Isaac from choice and not, as in patrilocal marriage, by established custom, while Laban is said to have objected to Jacob taking away his daughters notwithstanding his having paid a purchase price for them (Gen. xxxi. 43).

In drawing sociological conclusions from the patriarchal narratives in the book of Genesis, it has to be remembered that the stories are largely in the nature of tribal legends in which the actions of individuals often reflect ethnological alliances and feuds rather than individual relationships. Nevertheless, while it cannot be taken for granted that the practices attributed to these traditional figures were necessarily those in vogue among the ancient Hebrews, the traditions suggest an early stage of society in which the wife occupied a more matriarchal position in the clan organization, having her own tent whither her husband resorted to "go in" to her, and even sometimes remaining in the house of her parents. It would seem, therefore, that patriarchal conditions in Israel were a process of development arising out of some form of mother-right, though by the time the literature of the Old Testament was compiled, paternal authority was definitely established, and the family regulated accordingly. This is further indicated by the organization into tribes and clans.

The Hebrew clan was by no means a typical patriarchal family with the *pater familias* as the priest of the household, together with the descendants male and female, their wives and servants, of one common dead ancestor, composing the *familia*. It is true the nation called Israel was thought of as

the offspring of an eponymous ancestor in a single family, and descent was exclusively in the male line, while each of the tribes was similarly descended. As among the Bedouin, no member of the clan held a position of authority corresponding to that of *pater familias*. Even Moses is represented as exercising merely a moral and personal ascendancy comparable to that of a sheikh, and the same is true of the patriarchs. In the individual family the wife and children are represented as the property of the husband, and marriage was arranged by payment of a dowry (*mohar*) to the father or the bride's brothers as a purchase price. Polygamy was recognized, and the prohibited degrees in the Levitical table presupposed this practice.

### *The Canonical Code of Kindred and Affinity*

The earliest Biblical code governing forbidden marriages is that set forth in Deut. xxvii. 20-23 (cf. xxii. 30), making taboo the father's wife, a man's sister or half-sister, and his mother-in-law. To this seventh-century legislation were added the Levitical regulations in the "Code of Holiness" considered to belong to the school of Ezekiel. In all probability these further restrictions were directed against existing practices, and, therefore, marriage with a daughter or grandmother was omitted because it was never contracted. The



prohibitions, however, seem to be mainly concerned with sexual taboos rather than nuptial unions as such, though the fifteen relationships forbidden in Lev. xviii. 6-18 have come to be regarded as the divine law in the matter of incest, alike in Judaism and in Christianity. Thus, among the Reformers in the sixteenth century A.D., Luther and Calvin made the Levitical legislation the ultimate precepts derived from "Natural Law," and therefore of universal and perpetual obligation, though the former refused to admit any extension of the degrees, while the latter declared that they must be extended to include parallel cases. Consequently, he argued, since nature prescribes that a woman may not marry two brothers in succession, it is equally forbidden to a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, notwithstanding the fact that the prohibition does not occur in Leviticus.

In England the question was brought into peculiar prominence by the controversy concerning the marriage of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. In reply to the refusal of Clement VII to invalidate the union, Convocation in 1533 decreed that "marriage with a deceased brother's wife (i.e. Henry's with Katherine) was invalid by divine law, in such wise that the Pope could not dispense with the impediment." This conclusion rested on the theory of affinity that when man and wife

become "one flesh," the relatives of the one become the relatives of the other. Moreover, in the Act for the establishment of the succession before the king's marriage with Jane Seymour in 1536, *copula illicita* no less than marriage was held to contract affinity, since it produced *unitas carnis*. This rendered the marriage with Anne Boleyn invalid.<sup>1</sup>

Behind these injunctions lie a sacramental interpretation of marriage based ultimately on Gen. ii. 24. The general prohibition in Lev. xviii. 6, however, uses the expression "near of kin," or "flesh of flesh" (*sh'er basar*), and while St. Basil in his letter to Diodorus regards the phrase as referring to Gen. ii. 24, this view is rejected by modern scholars, who refuse to allow that it is a technical term meaning "the kindred of a man's wife." But granting that no more than "nearest of kin" is to be understood by the Hebrew idiom, the fact remains that the Evangelists based the marriage relationship on the original union of man and wife as "one flesh," as set forth in the Genesis story (cf. St. Mark x. 8, St. Matt. xix. 5 f.). Therefore, so far as Christianity is concerned, the theory of affinity does not rest solely on the Levitical legislation since it goes behind this code to the ultimate nature of the institution.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. H. Joyce, *Christian Marriage* (London, 1933), pp. 544 ff.

According to the canonical ruling of the Church, affinity arises from any sexual intercourse resulting in the birth of children, and extends to the fourth degree of consanguinity,<sup>1</sup> the degree of affinity coinciding with that of blood relationship, except in the case of illicit congress out of marriage when the impediment is limited to the second degree. In the old dispensation it was only the descent within the institution of marriage that carried with it this relationship, while Roman law regarded the consummated marriage as a bar to further unions within the kindred in the direct line. The Christian emperors extended it to the first degree of collateral affinity, and ecclesiastical law added the prohibition to illicit intercourse. But this necessitated a system of free dispensation which tended to make the law of little effect in actual practice. Indeed, the dispensing power of the Church was not confined to degrees of affinity, so that in theory any marriage other than that between parent and child could be dispensed. Actually the Holy See has never granted a dispensation for a marriage between brother and sister however extenuating the circumstances, as, for example, in the case of such a union having been

<sup>1</sup> According to the Roman method of computing degrees of relationship, count is made from one of the contracting parties up to a common ancestor and then down to the other party, so that first cousins, for instance, become related in the fourth degree, and uncle and niece in the third degree.

contracted without the knowledge of the relationship on the part of the two parties.

The Reformers, on the other hand, declared this canonical procedure to be an abuse, and averred that the Levitical law was a fixed divine law incapable of being rendered invalid by dispensation. But, as we have seen, they differed as to whether the prohibitions in question were those only which are explicitly enumerated, or extend to those which are analogous in principle. The Table of Kindred and Affinity drawn up by Archbishop Parker in 1563 followed the extensions of Calvin to cover unions in which consanguinity or affinity was parallel to the prohibitions in Leviticus. Moreover, it accepted the *copula illicita* as constituting affinity just as much as lawful marriage. The Parker Table was affirmed by Canon 99 and so became "the law of God and of the realm," though by common law marriages within these degrees were voidable only until 1835, when by Lord Lyndhurst's Act they were made null and void *ab initio*. In 1908 marriage with a deceased wife's sister was legalized in the British Isles, but with the proviso that a parish priest should be free to refuse to celebrate such a union according to the rites of the Church.

The theological objection to a man marrying his sister-in-law after the death of his wife cannot be sustained by reference to the Levitical code however

ingeniously this may be argued,<sup>1</sup> since Lev. xviii. 18 presupposes a polygamous society. But it can reasonably be maintained that the practice infringes the sacramental bond whereby husband and wife become "one flesh," so that the relations of the one are *ipso facto* the relations of the other. There can be little doubt that this conception lies behind Gen. ii. 24, in view of the long anthropological history of mystic relationships and incestuous marriage centring in the sacredness of the blood covenant and common life essence (cf. Gen. xxix. 14). For the same reason the Church has always regarded Holy Matrimony as constituting an indissoluble bond, and, therefore, unlike Judaism and pagan Rome, it has condemned divorce as incompatible with its doctrine of marriage (cf. St. Mark x. 8; St. Matt. xix. 5, 6; St. Luke xvi. 18).<sup>2</sup>

### *Divorce*

In Christian theology the natural institution was raised to a sacramental relationship which could be severed only by the death of one of the partners, on the ground that Christ had restored it to its original significance. Since this interpretation rests on what is alleged to have occurred at the threshold

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Watkins, *Holy Matrimony*, pp. 650 ff., where the argument is set out in detail.

<sup>2</sup> The Matthean exceptive clause is generally admitted by scholars to be a secondary gloss on the original "Saying" from Q more accurately reproduced in Luke xvi. 18.

of the human race when Adam and Eve were made one flesh by God at the creation of the species, the permanence of marriage is a natural law of divine ordinance to make possible the production, nurture and education of children within a monogamous family. From this basic assumption Western canonists have argued that once a lawful marriage has been consummated it can never be dissolved, though not only separation from bed and board may be granted, leaving the marriage intact, but the Church also claims the right to issue a decree of nullity on the presupposition that some impediment, such as fear, violence or impotence, has invalidated the union from the beginning. Only when it can be proved that there has been no true marriage is it permitted for either or both of the persons concerned to enter into a new alliance. Closely associated with this practice is the so-called "Pauline privilege" (1 Cor. vii. 12-15), whereby the Apostle makes an exception to the principle of indissolubility in the case of a convert to the Faith whose non-Christian partner refuses to live in conubium, or if further cohabitation would be the occasion of mortal sin. The marriage may then be dissolved, but only after the baptism of the catechumen.

The Eastern Churches have always permitted divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* for adultery and other

special causes, such as insanity, leprosy and certain crimes. In the West in practice re-marriage during the lifetime of the partner has been of frequent occurrence owing to the freedom with which the Papal powers of dissolution have been employed. At the Reformation the rejection of the sacramental basis of the union reacted against the doctrine of indissolubility in Northern Europe, though the English ecclesiastical courts steadfastly resisted the Puritan attempts to introduce facilities for divorce. Parliament occasionally dissolved a marriage when adultery on the part of the wife had been proved, but prior to the abolition of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts in matrimonial cases in 1857, the civil law in England, as in most Catholic countries abroad, upheld the canonical ruling. Subsequent legislation has extended the grounds of divorce and facilitated the process of obtaining release from the union, but the general consensus of Christian opinion has been opposed to any measures which might undermine the stability and sanctity of home life based on the permanence of the marriage relationship.

*The Fundamental Principles underlying Marriage and the Family*

In the light of modern knowledge, the doctrine of original indissolubility as stated in terms of the

Eden story requires some modification, but, nevertheless, as we have seen, the available evidence points to the family as the basic unit of human society. As Westermarck says, "there is not a shred of genuine evidence for the notion that promiscuity ever formed a general stage in the history of mankind."<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, Sir Grafton Elliot Smith is unquestionably correct when he affirms that "the family is the grouping invariably formed in the absence of an alien influence not only in human communities but also in the man-like Apes. It is thus the social unit that gives expression to man's innate tendencies."<sup>2</sup> Under the most primitive conditions of which we have knowledge, small groups of relatives live together as families with certain strictly enforced rules regulating the selection of a partner and of marital relationships within the homestead and community. Further, as Professor Malinowski has shown, the processes underlying the development of culture consist in the substitution of a system of sentiments for a system of linked instincts. These sentiments can be developed only within a family organization which makes it possible for the young to be nurtured for a prolonged period.<sup>3</sup> Communal marriage and a communal nursery do not fulfil the sociological

<sup>1</sup> *History of Human Marriage* (London, 1921), vol. I, p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> *Human History* (London, 1930), p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (London, 1927).



conditions of human culture any more than they suffice for the biological and psychological requirements of the human organism. A healthy home life can be maintained only in a permanent family relationship based on a sound marriage system, and this in turn is essential to the well-being of the social order as a whole.

At the root of this emotional development lies the relationship between mother and child as the starting-point of the family. The bond uniting these two primary units is a much more intimate one than that which unites father and child: around it has grown up the sanctity of motherhood and its sentiments. Consequently, the maternal and matriarchal aspects of the family organization constitute the psychological, ethical and sociological foundations of society in their respective functions. But the exercise of paternal authority and care is also a vital element in a sound family life, and while this may be a rather later development in its more patriarchal forms, it is, nevertheless, a factor of supreme importance in the education of the individual and the evolution of society.

The function of religion is to preserve intact the family organization by surrounding it with supernatural sanctions and taboos designed to prevent marital relationships which are liable to be destructive of the psychological foundations and harmony

of the home. Mating involves competitive courtship and this inevitably would produce bitter sexual jealousies if it occurred within the family circle. In different types of society the prohibitions necessarily vary according to the specific conditions that prevail. Where matriarchy obtains the maternal relatives will be the nearest of kin, and most intimately concerned with the ordering and constitution of the home and homestead. Therefore, they have to be kept free from matrimonial entanglements. Under patriarchy the reverse is the case.

Again, when, for example, either uncle and niece, or aunt and nephew are in the degree of *loco parentis*, marriage between them normally is forbidden, as otherwise parental authority would be undermined. The same is true of cousins. In the more remote relationships, prohibitions are determined on the same principle, and, apart from theological considerations, the valid objection to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, or a deceased husband's brother, is the likelihood of such an alliance creating jealousies and discord between husband and wife when a sister-in-law or a brother-in-law is in intimate association in the home. In certain cases, and where joint family life is common, this may be a very real danger.

But the sanctions of religion are not confined to preventing undesirable and socially disturbing

unions. The belief in descent from a common ancestor, or special creation by a personal God Who is the eternal Father of mankind, gives solidarity to human relationships in the family or kin united by this bond, and affords an ultimate meaning of life and destiny. Within such a fraternity, be it a totemic group, a mystic fellowship or Church, the home has a supernatural basis in the transcendent and eternal world. The sentiment of protective love and parental care is fostered and related to the reverential filial trust in an overruling Providence of which the earthly family is an integral part.

This conception reaches its clearest and loftiest expression in the Christian doctrine of the divinely-constituted family of God and bride of Christ, in which the paternal and maternal relationships are united in one complete whole. Thus, as Freud has pointed out, "it is not without a deep reason that the similarity between the community and a family is invoked, and that believers call themselves brothers in Christ, that is, brothers through the love which Christ has for them. There is no doubt that the tie which unites each individual with Christ is also the cause of the tie which unites them with each other."<sup>1</sup> The common relation to the love of a single personality superior to them all makes them identify themselves mystically with Him and so with

<sup>1</sup> *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, pp. 42 f.

one another. In this way the emotional ties characteristic of the family become the basis of the wider relationships of the group-life, and produce sentiments essential to cultural development and consolidation, on the one side, and, on the other side, of the Christian principle of faith made perfect in love. "Every Christian," says Freud, "loves Christ as his ideal and feels himself united with all other Christians by the tie of identification. But the Church requires more of him. He has also to identify himself with Christ and love all other Christians as Christ loved them."<sup>1</sup>

From their most rudimentary beginnings it would seem the sentiments developed within the family enabled mankind to go forward as a social organism rather than merely as a biological species, till at length the goal was reached in the ideal relationships of a supernatural fellowship. Throughout this process the co-ordinating principle has been the spiritual dynamic which has held together the family as the basis of social life in a providential ordering of society. When the religious impulse which supplies the cohesive unifying force is removed the organism ceases to fulfil its functions.

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

From the sentiments and emotional ties developed within the family a complex system of personal-social relationships has emerged in the wider life of the group as part of the process of adaptation to a new or changing environment. If the human race was to survive as a biological type a community organization had to be evolved just as the prolongation of family ties was an essential condition of culture. But man is not merely a biological species, and as a spiritual organism he has sought to establish his community life on a transcendental basis in the belief that he is dependent corporately as well as individually on the forces of destiny and providence. Thus, as we have seen, in primitive society the social organization is linked with the providential ordering of the food supply, and the perpetuation of the race through the supernatural control of the processes of fecundity. Furthermore, the ritual of food production unites the community not only to the beneficent powers responsible for the divine gifts but also consolidates all the individual members of the group into a consanguineous blood brotherhood. Thus, under totemic conditions the

totemites become all one-flesh with one another as a result of their mystic alliance with the common supernatural ally regarded as the source of the communal existence.

### *The Spiritual Foundations of the Community*

As Freud points out, "if the individuals in the group are combined into a unity, there must surely be something to unite them, and this bond might be precisely the thing that is characteristic of a group."<sup>1</sup> Social sanctions by themselves cannot supply the unifying principle since *vox populi* is not necessarily *vox Dei*. The group like the individual looks to an "otherness" beyond itself with which it seeks to establish beneficent relations as a transcendent reality. Therefore, as has been pointed out in a previous chapter, totems and gods are not merely society divinized—the sum total of the social factors—any more than the individual can be resolved into the group of which he forms a part and within which his ideals are determined. The totem animal or plant is a kind of reservoir of the potency of the tribe or clan very much as in Indonesia and elsewhere one animal is considered to be the leader which keeps the herd together and is neither killed nor sold. Similarly, one tree in a grove is singled out as the chief which preserves the soul-substance of the other trees.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (London and Vienna, 1922), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Kruijt, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VII, pp. 237 f.



In human society the divine king as the leader of the community is regarded as the receptacle of the communal life of the group, so that in Egypt, for example, the potency of the nation was concentrated in a single personality, viz. the reigning Pharaoh. "He illuminates the Two Lands (Egypt) more than the sun-disk. He makes the Two Lands green more than a great Nile (a plenteous flood); he hath filled the Two Lands with strength. He is life cooling the nostrils . . . the one creating that which is; he is the Khnum (the god who forms out of clay) of all limbs; the Begetter, who causes the people to be."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the king was "he who gives life" because in him was the plenitude of all conceivable divine power and prosperity as the incarnation of beneficent Providence. In relation to the community he exercised supreme authority by virtue of his sacred office, and in relation to the supramundane order he was the mediator between the gods and men.

Therefore, in ancient society in so far as government was vested in the throne it was a divine function. The occupant ruled as the viceroy of the gods whom he embodied, and the community was thought to flourish or decline according to the condition of the sovereign. As Homer affirms, during the reign of a good king "the black earth bears

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. I, sect. 747.

wheat and barley, and the trees are laden with fruit, and the sheep bring forth and fail not, and the sea gives store of fish, and all out of his good guidance, and the people prosper under him.”<sup>1</sup> Conversely, as ageing kings frequently are slain that the potency of the throne may be preserved,<sup>2</sup> so any untoward incident in the community, or the natural order, may be attributed to a defect in the monarchy. Indeed, so deeply laid is this belief that even when the Ultimate Reality is regarded as a monistic principle, as in China, the ruler and *Tao* are united macrocosmically in the line ruler, earth, heaven, and microcosmically, so that by passing through successive stages of consciousness back to the Ultimate Unity, at length the Way (*Tao*) is reached which controls the phenomenal universe. “Within the realm there are four portions of greatness, and one belongs to the king. The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth. The ways of earth, by those of heaven. The ways of heaven by those of *Tao*, and the ways of *Tao* by the universal order.”<sup>3</sup>

Some tangible point of contact is needed with the changeless essence and the eternal Will controlling all things, even if it be a pantheistic principle rather than a transcendent Providence. This is found in the unique figure of the king mystically united in a

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, xix, 109 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 88 f., 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Tao-teh King*, xxv.

direct relationship with the Ultimate Reality. The ruler, however, is not conceived as an individual personality but as the representative of the totality of divine beneficence, whatever concrete or abstract form this may take in a given society. He is the bestower of life and potency, and in him the community is consolidated and related to the supernatural source of its being. When he is no longer able to fulfil these functions he has to give place to a successor because it is the sacred office, and not the specific occupant, that is vital to the welfare of mankind. Without a leader the group cannot exist as a living organism, but to be an effective unifying force the leadership must have some supernatural or transcendent reference external to the organization of the community. Society cannot govern itself, and so long as man feels himself surrounded by mysterious powers outside his control, social life in the last analysis must be rooted and grounded in a supramundane providential order of Reality.

Thus, the community is essentially a unified entity held together by a spiritual cohesive dynamic in a divine objectivity which finds expression in such institutions as totemism, ancestor-worship and the divine kingship. Around this common centre the social and religious life is organized, and by means of an elaborate ritual technique a right relationship is established between the human group and the

supernatural world in which it lives, moves and has its being. Moreover, the conviction that the social and cultural order has its spiritual counterpart upon which it depends for its continuance and well-being, binds together all living humanity in a fellowship which extends from ancestors and supernatural allies to descendants in varying degrees of kinship. Such a system can but make for social solidarity.

As at birth the child is given his place in the family as the primary unit of society, so on attaining manhood he is initiated into the mystical community of the tribe and its mysteries and sanctions. By means of a ritual process of rebirth a new relationship is established with the gods, totems or ancestral spirits who guide the destinies of society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the ceremonies should follow the same general pattern as those performed at the installation of a chief or the coronation of a king, and have the same purpose. As the divine ruler is consecrated to his sacred office and status to enable him to exercise his supernatural mediatorial functions, so the initiate undergoes a similar death and resurrection that he may attain to his proper rank in the community at large with all its sacred associations and powers. Therefore, as in Egypt only the Pharaoh originally became Osiris at death, and later every man passed to the Osirian

realms as a quasi-king, so in cultures which are not organized on a royal basis, initiation into an adult tribal brotherhood seems to have reversed the process. Initiates frequently assume royal regalia and attributes at the time of their installation, as, for example, in Fiji, the Torres Straits and Africa,<sup>1</sup> again suggesting that the rites are the equivalent of the coronation ceremony.

### *Church and State*

If this be so, the spiritual basis of society is revealed in a wider aspect inasmuch as the entire adult male population in these communities is incorporated into the mystical fellowship of the gods, totems and ancestral spirits constituting the providential order in a relationship comparable to that of a divine king. Nevertheless, the rise of secret cults and of an official priesthood has tended to restrict the exercise of supernatural functions and even to promote a rivalry between contending groups within the community. Thus, for example, in Egypt when Amenhotep IV sought to establish the worship of the Aton as the one God manifest in the solar disc, he was resolutely opposed by the Theban priesthood of Amon which after his death re-established its supremacy. Or, again, in the seventh or sixth century B.C., when the narratives concerning

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hocart, *Kingship* (London, 1927), pp. 134 ff.

the Hebrew monarchy were compiled under the influence of the Prophetic movement, bad kings and great prophets were set in marked contrast, as in the case of the story of Samuel and Saul, and Elijah and Ahab. After the Exile the Priestly school introduced a sacerdotal distinction between the royal house and the sons of Aaron and Levi, as in the account of the leprosy of king Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 16 ff.). Later in Rome the *pontifices* exercised a wide authority which completely eclipsed the influence of the *rex sacrorum*, so that they became the interpreters of the law, the administrators of the *patrius ritus*, the repositories of the *jus divinum* and the preservers of the *pax deorum*. Thus they had in their hands all the more important offices religious and secular. So the struggle went on through emperor and pope as Church and State became more and more distinct and rival sections in the community.

From its inception Christianity was in conflict with the world because it claimed that God created a new order of humanity through the Incarnation. Christ stands at the head of a redeemed race as the firstborn of a new creation uniting mankind in a relation of divine sonship in a community of love. The recognition of the fatherhood of God carries with it in Christian theology the notion of human fellowship and brotherhood. Of necessity all bap-

tized persons as initiates in the Christian Society are members one of another, and at the same time responsible for the extension of the Kingdom throughout the world. Man cannot fulfil his proper functions as an isolated individual, and always families have lived in communities, or groups, for mutual benefit and co-operation. The Church as the mystical body of Christ from the beginning was committed to this catholic conception of life and responsibility, and in its struggle with Manichæanism and Gnosticism it repudiated a negative spirituality. It was always on its guard against the more abstract mysticisms which tended to produce contempt of the world as a passing show, or of the body as essentially evil. Had it endorsed this Byzantine tendency, it would have "dwindled to a tiny sect of anti-social hermits," as Dr. Kirk has pointed out, "devoid of all interest in life, art, morality—indeed in everything except what has been called a 'static absorption in an unconditioned Reality.'" <sup>1</sup>

In the West the establishment of the Papacy as the infallible centre of a universal sovereignty, and the rise of monasticism, acted as correctives to the oriental detachment of the ascetics of Nitria and the Thebaid. The Augustinian notion of the *Civitas Dei* had laid the foundations of a practical ecclesiasticism, but the Church of the Empire had been a

<sup>1</sup> *The Vision of God* (London, 1931), p. 303.

church of the cities. Its organization was based on the municipal system, and the bishop played an even more important part in the life of the city than the civil magistrates themselves. Among the peasant Germanic and Celtic cultures, on the other hand, the social conditions were vastly different. Here the Church was forced to create its own communal life through the foundation of monasteries, or, as in Anglo-Saxon England, to make the tribal kingdom an episcopal see.<sup>1</sup> Even the Frankish Church became a *landeskirche*, or territorial Church, when the break-up of the urban organization destroyed the cohesion of the hierarchy. The bishops were more and more dependent on the Crown and developed into landed proprietors with a corresponding loss of spiritual autonomy.

### *Religious Communities*

To correct these abuses monastic communities were established as fully-equipped societies with their own church, cemetery, officials, work-shops, lands, infirmary and independent administration. At the head was the abbot, assisted by the prior and deans, the cellarer in charge of temporal affairs, and the various other officers necessary to the well-being of a self-contained *monasterium*. By the Rule as

<sup>1</sup> C. Dawson, *Medieval Religion* (London, 1934), p. 9.



devised by St. Benedict (480-c. 543), the virtual creator of Western monasticism, the virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience were enjoined as the fundamental threefold vow, with regular Hours for the corporate recitation of the divine office and the practice of silence, hospitality and manual work.

Thus, the monastery was a miniature city within the existing ecclesiastical-monarchical territorial agrarian organization, just as in the East Mount Athos in the Ægean Sea was a little republic under the Rule of St. Basil with a number of small hermitages dependent upon a confederation of greater monasteries. Severed from the "world," the Religious Communities developed not only a common sanctity and morality, but also a culture which throughout the Dark Ages preserved an intellectual tradition. Indeed the Carolingian abbeys were the only real centres of culture apart from the royal palace, and but for the monasteries the liberal arts scarcely could have survived in an age of ceaseless strife and barbarity.

It was the monks who maintained the dignity of labour, and made the desert blossom as the rose by dint of their toil. It was they who preserved the spark of learning in their schools and colleges, and stimulated æsthetic appreciation by the beauty and nobility of their edifices, within which the fundamental principles of Christian society were firmly

laid, till in course of time they too became a prey to the very evils they had sought to overcome. With the accumulation of wealth and a growing secularism, the original ideals were lost or obscured, and instead of being homes of religion and abodes of learning and culture, they degenerated into large landed estates mainly occupied with secular affairs and the rights of property. Instead of being spiritual leaders, abbots became good men of business, and monks not infrequently brought scandal upon their order by a worldly and even vicious mode of living.

Nevertheless, while in the Middle Ages general laxity came to prevail in the organization of the Religious Houses, the emergence of a new civilization was largely the outcome of the spiritual and cultural influence of the monasteries. In days when the profession of arms was the only profession of the free born, when manual labour in the fields bore the stigma of the slave, common life lived under the Benedictine Rule in a spiritual society in which all the members were bound together to help each other in the fulfilment of his vocation to the greater glory of God stood in marked contrast to the barbarity of the outside world. To enter "Religion" meant at least to make some pretence at self-discipline, since even in the fifteenth century, when the earlier austerities had been widely abandoned,

the majority of monks lived an ordered communal life in which the daily routine was divided between prayer, manual labour, learned or artistic pursuits, temporal business, the claims of hospitality and the care of the sick. If the religious habit carried with it exemption from episcopal control and the enjoyment of the accumulation of wealth in greater or less degree, it involved a measure of discipline and regularity, and produced that enrichment of personality which comes from a proper community of life based upon fellowship through a religious ideal and spiritual dynamic. But in so far as the monasteries became a means of escape from the world and the vicious pleasures of profane society, they lost their cohesive force, and degenerated into loosely associated groups of "refugees" living together merely for their own selfish ends under rules which they imposed upon themselves with little or no control from an effective external authority.

The Franciscan movement in the thirteenth century introduced a new spirit of fraternity founded on romantic chivalry rather than on Benedictine asceticism. The monk withdrew from the world in cloistered seclusion; the friar, like Wesley in later times, made the world the battleground of his knightly adventures in the service of the Cross and Lady Poverty. What he lost by the

absence of intense community life, he gained by his profound sense of the brotherhood of man in the fellowship of Christ. To the nobility of this romantic idealism men readily responded, and in crowded cities, at fairs and markets, wherever, in fact, the poor, the ignorant and the degraded, as well as the great masses of mankind, were to be found, the friars carried all before them. Thus, they laid the foundations of a new type of social movement which also found expression in the art and literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and was destined to play an important part in the awakening of Europe in the age of the Renaissance.

St. Francis belonged to the new world of Italian urban culture rather than to the agrarian organization in which Benedictine monasticism had taken its rise. Though he regarded learning with as much suspicion as he did wealth, his followers eventually held property in common and devoted themselves to intellectual pursuits. Like their rivals the Dominicans, they concentrated on University centres, and in the fourteenth century captured Oxford. In England they produced such scholars as Roger Bacon, William Occam and Duns Scotus, who disputed with the Dominicans of Paris. But they rapidly deteriorated, and having no corporate life to hold them together like the Benedictine

Orders, they tended to become mendicants when they ceased to be either saints or students. It remained for the Scholastic philosophers to attempt the synthesis of all knowledge in one vast theological scheme, as all-embracing as the Papal theocracy in the political sphere, or the monastic organization in the domain of Religion, when in the fourteenth century the rediscovery of Greek thought acted as a powerful stimulus to intellectual inquiry.

### *The Secularization of Society*

The harmonious marriage of Greek rationalism with Hebrew-Christian traditionalism was destined, however, to give birth to a liberalizing movement which eventually destroyed the Medieval Synthesis and the religious culture that Church and State had combined to produce. The Franciscan revival was humanistic in the sense that it restored the reality and value of the outer visible world of nature and of men, while Scholasticism sought to reconcile Aristotelian cosmology with Christian anthropology. But the cultural Renaissance in the South in the fifteenth century, and its equally drastic religious Reformation in the next century in the North, mark the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern World. And both in their turn asserted the independence of man and made their contribution to the secularization of society.

The rediscovery of the culture of the pagan empire under the influence of the New Learning led to a wider outlook, and in place of a spiritual theocracy popes and princes joined together in an effort to restore the glories of classical culture in their endeavour to make Rome the most splendid city of the world. In the Protestant North the bid for freedom was directed towards emancipation from ecclesiastical control in the matter of discipline and doctrine and freedom of conscience, but it also opened the way for the emergence of a new cultural tradition independent of the Christian revelation. It is true that as the Renaissance looked back to the glory of Greece and the splendour of Rome, the Golden Age of the Reformation was Israel in the days of its redemption. But just as the New Learning infused the Greek spirit of inquiry into the medieval heritage, so Protestantism led a revolt against stereotyped corporate thinking.

By placing the emphasis on the personal relation of the individual to God without the aid and intervention of any ecclesiastical institution, the idea of a Church was relegated to a position of minor importance. As salvation was no longer dependent upon sacraments or the ministrations of a priesthood, and might even be determined by predestination, a visible society as a grace-bearing body was replaced by congregations of believers. Thus,

Christians re-grouped themselves into sects, animated by a conscious personal piety and common stock of doctrines, based ultimately on a private interpretation of Scripture.

The word "sect" is derived from the Latin *sequi*, and conveys the meaning of a religious party—a segregation from the community in general—implying a choice or tendency, like the Greek *αἵρεσις*, a heresy, comparable in Judaism to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and later the Christians. By severing themselves from the body corporate (i.e. the community) the "separatists" break away from the accepted tradition and organization in order to attain salvation in some quite distinctive way, as in the Græco-oriental Mystery cults. This involves the establishment of a new cultural tradition distinct from that of the parent community, until in process of time the "sect" itself becomes a "Church" with its own internal societies and national unities. Thus, Buddhism was a sectarian movement within Hinduism, and Islam was a heresy as strongly opposed by the Arabic community at Mecca as was Christianity by Jews and Gentiles. In due course all these sects became Churches, while to-day in England the denominations which until recently were commonly known as "dissenters" or "nonconformists" are developing into "free churches."

At the Reformation in the sixteenth century, however, individualism was the characteristic feature of the new sectarianism which challenged the established religious order and its doctrines in an endeavour to maintain the rights of personal religious thought. Dogma became a secondary element and individual spiritual experience took the place hitherto occupied by the collective faith of the body corporate. But in any theological scheme there must be some ultimate authority, and the Reformers were as fundamentally sceptical and distrustful of reason as any of their predecessors. For them the Scriptures were as infallible a guide as the Church had been for the medieval theologians. Consequently, while Protestantism made independence of belief and practice a cardinal virtue in theory, in fact it was as rigid in its theological outlook and assertions as Catholicism.

Nevertheless, the flood-gates had been opened, and neither the Reformation nor the Counter-Reformation could keep back the tide. The new type of secular thought and spirit of inquiry which took its rise in the Renaissance became a mighty torrent in the seventeenth century and onwards destined to overwhelm the civilized world. With it came a new social order, a new idealism and a new industrial-economic life deriving their inspiration from scientific knowledge rather than from the



Christian revelation. Herein lies a major problem of the modern world.

In the centuries that have intervened since these far-reaching changes first became the characteristic feature of Western civilization, Christian theology has made a serious attempt to re-state its cardinal doctrines in terms of the new knowledge it now possesses. But in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries theological thought was as confused as loyalties were strained. The searching of the Scriptures, as Hooker recognized, filled men with "infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble and extreme despairs,"<sup>1</sup> while scientific world-views seemed to conflict in a most disquieting manner with the Biblical conception of the universe and its operations. Moreover, while Northern Christendom became the scene of warring sects and theological uncertainties, the amazing progress of science and technical invention rapidly was transforming peasant cultures into great industrial civilizations.

The moral discipline enforced by post-Reformation ethics and the lofty ideals of Protestantism tended to develop the spirit of enterprise and thrift which fostered modern capitalism and the accumulation of wealth. Similarly, on the scientific side, the evolutionary idea inherent in the Copernican

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. II, chap. VIII, p. 6.

astronomy, and later made explicit in Darwinian biology, found its counterpart in the notion of progress when it was applied to human society. With the rapid growth of rationalism consequent upon the break-up of the theological sanctions and the weakening of religious faith, science came to be regarded as the new dynamic which if directed aright, and employed to its fullest capacity, would bring about the social millennium. As in England the Deists sought to establish a rational religion of Nature in place of the supernatural creed of historic Christianity, so in France Rousseau and the Encyclopædists proclaimed a new gospel of an idealized state of nature and the perfectibility of man and society. Similarly, in Germany Kant maintained that the individual realizes his full powers only in a constantly developing community held together by laws designed to secure justice and stability in a world-wide republic of perpetual peace.

The Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, however, revealed that something more than mechanization and rationalist liberalism was needed if the new spirit of humanity and progress was to attain its end. Therefore, the closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed a *rapprochement* between science and religion in a joint effort to arrive at a synthesis of scientific and social activity, and ethical and religious values. The Church, which in Eng-

land had recently awakened from its prolonged slumbers, was to provide the driving-power in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth as the goal to which the evolutionary process was leading. Science was to contribute its knowledge, foresight and control of natural forces, but it had to recognize the paramount interest of religion in ethical good, and do homage to it as the custodian of value.<sup>1</sup>

This doubtless seemed reasonable enough in an age of phenomenal prosperity, but to-day science has been revealed as a two-edged weapon. It can and does make for social amelioration, but its beneficent inventions and humanitarian ministries have to be set against its destructive powers. Science is a method of correct thinking within a specified range of facts, observations and experiments, but as such it is impersonal. It can be of invaluable assistance in combating disease and promoting health, but equally it may be used for the manufacture of deadly gases, bombing aeroplanes, and other anti-social devices. In 1914-1918 the Great War made this only too apparent, and in revealing the true nature of science as the dynamic of society, it also destroyed the idea of progressive civilization as it had been conceived in the secure days of the later Victorian and Edwardian Age.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Selwyn, *The Approach to Christianity* (London, 1925), pp. 2 ff.

The period that has intervened has been one of disillusionment. A widespread loss of faith equally in progress and in civilization has found expression in a series of revolutionary movements which confirm the truth that redemption can come only through pain, suffering and struggle. The rise of the Totalitarian State alike in its Communist and Fascist aspects is in a sense a return to a Church type of society. The liberalism of pre-war days, which regarded the State as the instrument for promoting peace, security and freedom for the individual, has suffered a serious reverse at the hands of modern political "ideologies" which are based on a more radical attitude towards social reform. So far from religion being an instrument of progress in a bureaucratic State, it is now posited as part of the hypothetical "enemy," in line with "Capitalism" and "Judaism," and therefore a danger to the solidarity of the community.

As in the past society was held together by a common faith and theocratic leadership which claimed the undivided allegiance of all its members, so to-day in one country after another rival political parties are giving place to authoritarian control by a Leader who inspires the whole-hearted loyalty and support of the entire community with a surrender as absolute as in any Church. This is achieved through the centralization of the public

services, such as education, broadcasting, the cinema, the press and the adoption of a mythology, as cohesive forces. All the resources of modern psychology, in fact, are employed to create the type of mind such a society demands, while a secular philosophy of life has been devised to give an ultimate meaning to human destiny in accordance with the tenets of the ideology.

### *Marxian Materialism*

Thus, Karl Marx, the father of modern Communism, was primarily a materialistic philosopher, and in drawing up his scheme for the new organization of society, he substituted for religion an "interpretation of history" based on Hegel's theory of progress in the gradual realization of the "Idea" on its way to self-knowledge, and the dialectic as the instrument of inevitable change. The history of the world, according to Hegel, begins with the Idea expressing itself in its effort to come to the knowledge of itself by making itself actually that which it is potentially. When it reaches its goal, the Idea will be absolutely free, and history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom. But this process is a struggle out of which a new synthesis of old and new emerged creating a higher Idea.

Marx, on the other hand, made the determining

factor not the Idea but matter which he equated with human activity in society perpetually producing new and higher forms of social and economic organization till at length the perfect state is attained. The "materialistic interpretation of history," therefore, is merely the development of the economic process finding expression in a changing social structure, class relationships and religious and legal systems. But one and all alike are derived from the material conditions of life, the economic factor universally being dominant. A succession of ruling classes have characterized the upward development of society, each dominant group in its turn producing by way of reaction its opponent which has destroyed it. Consequently, according to this revolutionary theory of social dialectic, conflict and social antagonism form the basis of social progress.

Feudalism as a system of production based on antagonism might have been beneficent, it is contended, if serfdom, privilege and violence had been eliminated and the development of the bourgeoisie annihilated. But wealth was productive within this antagonism till the ruling class destroyed itself. Similarly, the Industrial Revolution undermined the power of the landlords of the former régime and introduced a new governing class of Capitalist employers, who were opposed by

organized "labour." This, as Marx maintained, has prepared the way for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as the means of establishing a classless community of free and equal men as the final goal. When this has been accomplished, oppression and exploitation will cease and the millennium will be attained. According to the modern exponents of Marxism, Russia is still in the interim state, and suffering the pangs of the new era which has yet to be born; a delivery prolonged by the counter-revolution of the National Socialists,<sup>1</sup> and an even more deadly "enemy," the "Trotskyites." But until the whole world has been emancipated, and the last enemy destroyed, the class-state dictatorship must remain.

In this interpretation of human society religion is a by-product resulting from the defects of the economic system which keeps men in a perpetual condition of stress and insecurity. Therefore, hopes and fears are projected in a supernatural order which acts as an "opium" for unfulfilled desires and blighted aspirations. By inventing a paradise in another world, or a golden age in the past, the injustices, inequalities and toils of this earthly pilgrimage are sublimated, while the governing class fosters these fictions for its own selfish ends.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written before the Democracies became "the enemy" as a result of the Russo-German pact, and its sequel in Finland.

But when the millennium is reached in the hypothetical classless society, all needs will be satisfied and religion will be as superfluous as under existing conditions it is futile to remedy the evils inherent in the Capitalist régime. Therefore, the Communist eliminates all transcendental values and references in this life, and in place of personal salvation and individual immortality he substitutes the collective regeneration of the human race and its relationships at some point in the indefinite future.

While supernatural sanctions are denied, the Marxist ideology has all the fervour and potency of a religion without its ultimate concepts. But as a philosophy it fails to supply the dynamic essential for the cohesion of the community except on a basis of the class-war, thereby making the "bad" element in society as necessary in the historic process as the "good." Without class-conflict life becomes static, and, as the Russian experiment shows, some potential or actual opponent always must be at hand to be "unmasked" and "liquidated." Now that Capitalists, *kulaks* and priests have been exterminated as a class, vengeance falls on hypothetical "enemies of the people" who are usually high officials and prominent members of the Communist Party alleged to be "wilful wreckers," or agents of Trotsky, or of some



“Fascist” organization or Democratic nation. In the U.S.S.R., in short, a new class-state with Imperialistic aims has arisen which is struggling to maintain its solidarity by a class franchise to promote class interests heavily weighted in favour of urban industrial workers. But since this class rule demands the continual presence of some external danger to act as the dynamic of the class-war and militaristic ambitions, the spirit of bitterness becomes in practice an essential element in dialectical materialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, as these theoretical reconstructions of society are being put into operation to-day.

In striking contrast is the Christian Gospel of peace and goodwill as the purpose and potency of the religion of the Incarnation, founded as it is on the brotherhood of man through the fatherhood of God. Whereas for the Marxist man has value only as a collective personality, that is to say as part of society moving towards its classless goal, for the Christian each individual is a living soul of infinite worth in the eyes of his Creator, Who wills that all men, each as a separate personality, shall attain to the fulness of his redeemed humanity. To this end right conduct, based upon a right belief concerning the ultimate meanings of life, is the supreme test.

That man cannot reach perfectibility by his own unaided efforts, as Marx fondly supposed, is demon-

strated by the recurrence of human failure to attain to its aspirations, and not least under the dictatorship of the proletariat when Marxian principles are as fully established as ever have been the sanctions of religion. A vital process of regeneration within a corporate reality is essential for the redemption of humanity, and the creation of such a new humanity gives the historic process that absolute value and that transcendent end which Marxism seeks as its goal. The Christian like the Communist believes in a growth towards perfection, but for him the goal of his earthly struggles is the attainment of the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ in a perfected spiritual personality. He is conscious of his own shortcomings and repeated failures to conform his life to the divine pattern of human living as revealed in Christ, but having as his ideal and the ultimate source of his being a Reality transcending his own nature, Whom he believes to be a God of grace, he endeavours to fashion his life and character in accordance with His precepts. In the Cross history is seen in a new perspective of absolute spiritual values.

Religion is neither an "opium" nor a fiction. It is a way of life based on the inmost conviction of the personality as a whole that a spiritual fellowship exists between man and a Being Who has revealed His nature and purposes within the capacity of

human understanding, Who reads the human heart and requires sincerity of life in His worshippers. The man of faith determines his conduct in relation to ultimate values and standards which for him are absolutes, such as justice and honour, character and the will to serve. Ethical conduct is the core of spiritual religion, and conscience is the voice of God within the soul. It is only as man obeys the promptings of his higher nature that he can offer God that reasonable service which He demands, and his spiritual constitution, with its ideals and moral sanctions, is inexplicable without God as its ultimate ground. As Clutton-Brock says, "it is not so much that we are sure of our values as they are sure."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist ethic is as absolute in its claims on the allegiance of its adherents as that of Christianity, but in making human life merely the product of an economic process it leaves no room for Providence, for immortality, and a moral sense of the world. But it is only an ever-deepening personal trust in Ultimate Being that can really demand and permanently sustain a whole-hearted surrender in response to a purpose that transcends human endeavour. "Lord, here am I; send me," is the answer to the conviction that in a divinely-controlled universe God calls for human co-operation, and has

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Christianity*, p. 40.

Himself disclosed in some measure the ultimate meanings of human life and destiny. As against the Marxian materialistic interpretation of history the Christian derives his inspiration from a revelation in and through a divinely-guided historical process working to spiritual ends in which man has his share in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

In the last resort, as Plato and Kant have shown, the determining factors of religious belief are moral conditions, and only by love can this law be fulfilled. In making the ultimate ground of the universe and of human nature Incarnate Love, Christianity has postulated a more enduring basis of society than the class-warfare and class-consciousness of Communism which inevitably produces envy, hatred and malice. If the actual purpose of the Ultimate Principle is love, our duty as members of a society of persons is clearly to love our neighbours as ourselves. This, of course, is easy enough if we restrict the term "neighbour" to members of a class, group or family within the community with whom we have common ties and interests of blood, ideas or vocation, but to give it an all-embracing reference a Power outside ourselves, and transcending human relationships and sectional interests, is required to awaken a universal response. Now love is born not of hate but of love, and the

power of love is expressed not in self-interest but in self-sacrifice. In the Christian revelation Incarnate Love reaches its climax in the self-offering of Calvary which has found its practical application on the part of redeemed humanity in personal service on behalf of those who suffer or need succour in body, mind or estate.

It may be true that the Church corporately has not been as active or effective as it might have been, or ought to have been, in the matter of "liquidating" social evils that have long cried to heaven for reform, though even so it has to be remembered that when most of the abuses of modern Capitalism arose, Christianity had ceased to be the controlling force in the world. Thus, bourgeois Capitalism is really a product of economic Liberalism and its idealistic philosophy, as Marx recognized. Therefore, it had its origin in the post-Reformation secularized culture of the eighteenth century when religion was a spent force, and spiritual values had been subordinated to material ends.

But whatever may have been the shortcomings of Christianity in any age, so far as individuals are concerned, the people who have given themselves in personal service as living agents in slums, slave-markets, galleys, and the waste places of the earth, invariably have been animated and sustained in the drudgery of ceaseless toil by love of their fellows for

Christ's sake. So day in and day out they have continued in well-doing without looking for any recompense of the reward save that of doing His will in a dedicated life of self-giving. If the Church has much to learn from social reformers and political dialectic in the creation of higher standards of living and juster administration, in the last analysis social evil is rooted in human character, and it is the first business of religion to bring man into a right relationship with the God Who is Love. Behind political action must be something deeper and more enduring, and this the Church alone can supply because it is the divinely-ordained community which has been redeemed from self-interest by a supreme act of self-sacrifice, and called to manifest in the world a fellowship of faith and trust, of loyalty and love, finding expression in service to God and man.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE NATION AND NATIONALISM

Having considered the family and the community, we now pass to the third natural and historical social cohesion, the nation. Nationality, as distinct from nationalism, represents the sense of a people's total achievement in terms of human values, and this is a valid concept though in practice there may be geographical, ethnological and linguistic anomalies in the groupings adopted in given cases. The forces which go to the making of a nation are in essence spiritual, the State and its derivatives being originally a city community with its divine ruler and its temple as the world in microcosm. Thus, the Greeks, for example, believed the temple of Apollo at Delphi to be the navel, or *omphalus*, of the earth, as the abode of the god, and in the Egyptian temple the foundation of the world was renewed at the "primeval hill" on which the sun appeared for the first time. The temple of Amon at Karnak was the hub of the universe, and Amon had become identified with Egypt itself. At Karnak he ruled as king of the gods, Creator of mankind, and lord of the world. "Amon-Re the powerful, the divine lover, shining forth in Karnak his city, the lady of life."

The Babylonian ziqqurat, or temple-tower, consisted of a series of stages symbolizing the mythical mountain of the world, the planetary zones and the seven zones of the earth. On the platform at the top stood a chamber of the god containing a couch and throne and possibly a cult image. This was the centre of the life of the community, the connecting link between heaven and earth, and the sacred spot where contact was made with the powers controlling the universe. It was, in short, the natural centre and model of the world, reaching up to heaven vertically, and encompassing the land horizontally in a sacred bond.

### *The Jewish Conception of Nation*

The temple in Jerusalem occupied the same position in Judaism as the ziqqurat in Babylonia. Thus, not only was Mount Zion exalted above all other mountains to the highest point in the country, but it was also regarded as the summit of the earth, and the navel of the world (Ezek. xxxviii. 12).<sup>1</sup> The sacred rock was the "stone of foundation," being the first elevation of land raised out of the primeval waters at the creation.<sup>2</sup> "In Jerusalem all the winds in the world blow. Before it executes its mission, every wind comes into the holy city to

<sup>1</sup> Jellinck, *Beth ha-midrash*, V, 63, 1 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Yoma*, 54b (Bar).

make obeisance here before the Lord.”<sup>1</sup> But unlike the other peoples of the Ancient East, the Jews never regarded themselves as the world, or attached a cosmic significance to their rulers. They were essentially a nation rather than an empire. So far from attempting to extend their domain to the four corners of the earth, they looked forward to the time when the kingdom would be “restored to Israel” and Jerusalem would become the centre to which all mankind would be gathered to worship the One God in the beauty of holiness.

The story of the collapse of the tower of Babel seems to be a protest against the Babylonian hierocentric theory—“lest we be dispersed over the face of the earth” (Gen. xi. 4). The real and abiding rallying-point of the race is the theocratic centre of Israel (Jerusalem), and eventually a king would reign once more as God’s vicegerent in the power and glory of David, bringing peace and prosperity to Jerusalem. The present sufferings of the despised and defeated People of God were but the prelude to the Messianic Age when the universal kingdom with its divine reign of truth and justice would be established. The Messiah through whom this was to be accomplished was thought to be either a human Davidic Leader, or *Führer*, or a super-human being, the Son of Man.

<sup>1</sup> Bin Gorion, *Bom Judas*, V, 282.

*The Christian Catholic Outlook*

This Jewish conception of the nation as a spiritual unity and sacred community with a life and mission of its own independent of imperial aims and ambitions, but destined by God to fulfil a particular function and purpose in the world, was further developed by Christianity as the New Israel. As we have seen, the Incarnation meant for the followers of Christ that the reign of God had actually begun. The kingdom had come, and though its full significance and final consummation belonged to the supramundane and eternal order, in this world here and now the "life of the age to come" was an experienced reality. It was not, however, either a political or a social order, as in Jewish apocalyptic theology. Cæsar was left on his imperial throne and Pilate in the judgement seat. Everything went on apparently as usual, and no one could have predicted that an obscure birth in Bethlehem, ending in an ignominious death as a common criminal some thirty years later, would turn the world upside down. Yet so it was.

At first not only was the preaching of the Cross rejected by Jews and Greeks alike, but even the Christian society was inclined to look for a spectacular return of the Incarnate Lord as the glorified and triumphant Messiah to usher in the new age in

accordance with Jewish expectation. Thus, the New Testament closes with the pathetic cry, "even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." In a time of increasing persecution when men's hearts were "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth," this apocalyptic longing for the fulfilment of the hopes and promises of the Gospel read in the light of the Old Testament prophecies was inevitable. Nevertheless, St. Paul warned the Church at Thessalonica against an overconfident belief that the time is at hand (2 Thess. ii. 3 ff.), and at the end of the first century the Fourth Evangelist, in the Hellenic environment of Ephesus, declared that "God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil." (St. John iii. 17 ff.)

Here the Incarnation is made the supreme test of character, the challenge from which no man can escape. The coming of the kingdom is a coming of judgement into the world, and upon the response here and now depends the destiny of the soul in the eternal order, regarded as a present reality. But this

was not the kind of salvation which was calculated to satisfy the hopes and ambitions of Jewish nationalism, any more than it fitted the Stoic picture of a perfect State embracing the whole world. The Jew regarded himself as a member of a theocracy chosen by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be a Peculiar People "above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. xiv. 2). Consequently, for him the reign of God meant the establishment of a Utopian condition of society in which Judaism would be vindicated as a political entity.

The Stoic, on the other hand, looked for a new classless world-order of wise men governed by laws prescribed by nature rather than by convention. The city community of Rome had become a world empire, and with its expansion a wider notion of human society had emerged. This gave support to the Stoic conception of the "Inhabited World" as the natural fatherland of those who lived according to nature. Eventually all citizens of the world, it was contended, would be on terms of absolute equality animated only by a common love of humanity. But despite these optimistic hopes internal decline had begun in the Empire which even good government and a century of peace could not stay. Farming had fallen into disrepute, industrial conditions and economic enterprise deterior-

ated more and more, and after the death of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180, a century of revolution brought to its inglorious close the proudest Empire of the ancient world. It had made its own power and greatness the supreme law, and it destroyed itself.

When Christianity became the new and spiritual dynamic destined eventually to re-create civilization on a new basis, it inherited a theocratic nationalism from Judaism and a catholic outlook from its own central doctrine of the Incarnation. As the salt of the earth it was the ground of the world's continued existence. Its limits were world-wide, and its essence the nature of God Himself, the love of Christ. "Where Christ is there is the Catholic Church," said Ignatius. In other words, the Church is an organism whose head is Christ, and in its divine Head it is organically united to all mankind, on the one hand, and to universal omnipotence, on the other. Such a society must be all-embracing because it is all-sufficient; it can never be content to be merely national. Here lay its strength, but equally its problems.

### *The Church and Temporal Power*

If the simple appeal, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," proved to be a mightier power than all the edicts of Roman Emperors, in accomplishing its mission the Church

created its own internal difficulties. In becoming international it was in danger of substituting imperialism for catholicity; of regarding itself as the actual world, whereas Christ had repudiated temporal lordship. Its proper function was to be the leaven of the new world order. As Israel had maintained its claims to be the People of God called out from among the nations by divine ordinance, so the Church stood against the world as the Divine Society of the "age to come." So long as it was content to fulfil its proper vocation as the energizing force of a spiritual power coming from without, it proved to be the vital element in a declining European culture. It was only when it was tempted to exchange temporal for spiritual control that it gradually lost its leadership. In trying to gain the whole world by becoming an empire it lost its own soul, because in the process of secularization it absorbed the very elements it had sought to destroy, or to direct into new and spiritual channels.

In an age dominated by the idea of a world empire as the final solution of all government, temporal and spiritual, the decline of Roman imperialism left the Church in possession as the earthly representative of the Creator of all things visible and invisible. Assuming to control by love and the might of the Spirit, it had entered the lists to contend with force and intrigue, and ended by itself becoming subject



to all forms of degradation arising from political corruption. Thus, it lost its influence in the regeneration of man and society, and from being in conflict with the world, it became embodied in the social order with all its defects. To extricate itself from the meshes of its own inconsistencies it had to renounce its leadership and leave the State to its own devices, with the result that civilization lost its spiritual dynamic. Religion, as we have seen, eventually became an isolated element in a culture ever growing in complexity till at length it came to be regarded as an extraneous relic of antiquity, or a social tonic in times of crisis.

For a while it was allowed to occupy this invidious position, but to-day, with a revival of intense nationalism, the authoritarian States are no longer minded to look with complacency on any organizations which conflict with a philosophy of life and with standards of conduct not of their own devising. Therefore, as Communism has attacked Christianity from the side of dialectical materialism, so the various nationalistic movements, popularly comprehended under the name of "Fascism," have come in conflict with institutional religion as a result of their absolute claims to the domination of man in the totality of his being.

*The New Nationalism*

This latest form of the Totalitarian State, as it has found expression in Italy, Turkey and Germany, is akin in method to Marxism though violently opposed to it in theory and practice.<sup>1</sup> Both forms of Socialism are equally reactions against Parliamentary democracy of traditional Liberalism, and insistent on the suppression of all hostile elements and doctrines in the community, whether in the sphere of politics, economics, religion, education or the family, but while Communism makes class the foundation of the new society, for the new Nationalism the nation as a cultural and racial community is the underlying reality.

*(a) Italian Fascism*

Before the Great War Georges Sorel in France saw in Syndicalism a philosophy of social life which had revolutionary possibilities if it were promulgated by sufficiently violent methods, such as general strikes and the more vigorous forms of class warfare. For him the creative evolution of Bergson took the place of Hegelian dialectic in Marxism, and, therefore, he rejected any mechanistic idea of progress which viewed social change as historically

<sup>1</sup> In Germany, however, the pressure of recent events appears to have lessened the tension between the two ideologies, and revealed their fundamental identity of outlook.

and economically determined. If a new age was ever to be established it would only be as a result of a great struggle on the part of the proletariat. To this end the workers must be organized, and the "crusade of democracy" which followed the Great War filled him with despair. In Lenin he saw a "Peter the Great" introducing a "republic of producers," though he approved his realism. Of Fascism in Italy he had hopes because of the powerful leadership of Benito Mussolini, who designates Sorel as the most important inspirer of his movement.

The ideology of Fascism, however, is a fusion of Syndicalism and the notion of the sovereign national State as the dynamic of society. Parliamentarianism is rejected as being hopelessly ineffective and its place is taken by a governing "élite" representing the genius of the people, as in Sorel's theory. In Italy democratic Liberalism had failed completely, there having been no less than thirty-two governments between 1870 and 1922, each having an average life of eighteen months. Mainly as a result of the growth of Socialist influence, social and economic conditions steadily improved during the opening years of the present century, and with the rise in the general standard of living national sentiment developed. But Socialism failed as a ruling power through its own internal

divisions, and the granting of universal suffrage with proportional representation certainly did not strengthen parliamentary government. Participation in the Great War was desired by only a minority in the country, and the Peace Treaty produced widespread discontent inasmuch as it left Italy without either colonies or her former Dalmatian possessions. A period of industrial and moral depression followed, and in March 1919 Benito Mussolini organized his *fasci di combattimento* as a powerful military minority recruited from all sections in the nation.

Meanwhile Parliament was still vacillating; the Socialists and Trade Unionists were preoccupied with fruitless attempts to occupy the factories in defiance of the Government, and the progressive Catholic Party (*Popolari*) was in search of a policy. The times called for a man of action rather than for political theorists, and the newly-formed band of Fascisti provided a rallying-point for a distressed and desperate nation. Beginning as a Syndicalist, Mussolini soon realized that he must turn his attention to the urban and rural middle classes of small property owners and tenant farmers, who began to attach themselves to his movement and became an inner nucleus of shock troops. But it was not long before landowners and financiers threw in their support, and finally the king himself

went over to Fascism. Therefore, the victorious march on Rome on the 28th of October 1922 was really little more than the demonstration of an accomplished fact.

Unlike Lenin in Russia, Mussolini made no attempt to work out a theoretical system in accordance with a preconceived dialectic. He saw clearly the plight of his country, the disintegration of Italian parliamentarianism, and the disastrous consequences of class-warfare. A past-master of "crisis psychology," he was content to issue a call to action and depend upon his intuitive comprehension of the situation, and innate powers of leadership, to meet the needs of the moment as and when they arose. Fascism, in short, represents a spontaneous reaction to post-war chaos. In origin and intention it was and is opposed equally to Capitalism and Marxism. As a child of Sorel it has inherited most of the traits of revolutionary Syndicalism, to which it has added its own doctrines of Italian nationalism interpreted in the light of its Socialist ancestry. In place of the class-war it has introduced the sentiment of national patriotism as the means of promoting Sorel's ideals of heroism, honour and the ethics of conflict in an endeavour to establish social unity and solidarity. The nation has been elevated to a *corpus mysticum* calling forth the spirit of self-dedication which characterized

original Christianity. The first duty of the individual is to give himself body and soul for the well-being of the sovereign State. Therefore, explicit obedience to its demands is a *sine quâ non* in any totalitarian dictatorship, be it of the Communist or of the Fascist type.

If this fosters *esprit de corps*, it creates of necessity a governing *élite*, and renders impossible democratic principles. Although in Italy Parliament continued to survive in theory till it was finally abolished on December 14th, 1938, in practice as an elected assembly it had long been a farce. In the carefully controlled elections, as in Russia and Germany, every available device had been adopted to ensure the return of the Party "candidates," and since 1928 a single list of carefully chosen representatives had been submitted to the electorate for its formal approval. That such a system was accepted in a country notorious for its political intrigue and violent party strife, is a striking example of the discipline and obedience initiated by the new régime. The entire nation has been brought under the control of one outstanding personality who has produced order out of chaos, and holds in the hollow of his hand the whole complex machinery of the State. Authority is exercised from above, as in a theocracy, and every member of the Fascist Party takes an oath of obedience, as in a Religious Community, swearing

“to obey without question the commands of the Duce.” Indeed, he must be ready when necessary “to shed his blood for the Fascist revolution” because to the nation all things, even life itself, are to be subordinate.

This idea of the nation and its leader makes for efficiency as well as for solidarity inasmuch as it enables every individual to be employed in his proper function as a member of a Corporate State. Instead of trade union and similar international organizations of workers and employers, which frequently have a disruptive effect in society by promoting class-strife and political unrest, both Capitalism and Labour have been re-organized along the lines of Guild Socialism and Syndicalism, but ordered on a much more rigid basis of discipline under the elaborate control of the Fascist State. Similarly, every public institution, from the press and broadcasting to education and the cinema, is an integral part of the corporation, and therefore to be used in the national interest to shape and mould public opinion from the cradle to the grave. Thus, Fascism dominates the life and thought of man in the totality of his being, and declares its own authority to be the source of all authority.

Nevertheless, unlike the other forms of totalitarianism, it regards religion as an ally rather than an enemy; partly perhaps because Rome happens to

be the centre of Western Catholicism so that in a sense the Church is a national institution. But it also sees in it a cultural and social asset, and Signor Mussolini is sufficiently a realist to recognize the place of religion as the consolidating dynamic and ethical basis of the State. The creation of the Vatican City in February 1929 ended an *impasse* which had been a source of weakness to Italy since 1870. By this Concordat the temporal sovereignty of the Papacy was recognized in 108 acres of territory surrounded in Rome, though it remains to be seen how far the Pope has sacrificed his freedom of action in the universal jurisdiction he claims to exercise over the conscience of Christendom. It may be, on the other hand, that Pius XI will go down in history as a second Hildebrand, and his successor, Eugenio Pacelli, is too experienced a diplomatist, and too much devoted to the ideal of exorcising conflict from human relations, to be claimed as a champion of any political ideology. He is the product of a later school of thought than his predecessor, and has had a far wider experience of the world. He knows and understands modern Italy and modern Germany as Pius XI did not, and he can be trusted to use all his immense influence to bring harmony into the relations between Church and the totalitarian régimes without alienating the sympathies of the démocracies, in which his appoint-



ment has met with general approval. The Concordat revealed much wisdom in its choice. In Rome there are two schools of thought, one drifting away from Catholicism towards a politico-religious philosophy which is a mixture of Fascism, Nazism and Communism; the other taking its stand on the Church, the rights of property, and ordered liberty. The first of these looks in the direction of Berlin and Moscow; the second in that of Paris, London and Madrid, as the safeguard against Russo-German paganism. Which of these two sections of opinion ultimately will prevail will depend in great measure on the course of world events, but, unless something unforeseen happens, the decision will rest with Signor Mussolini. Unquestionably the Duce is still master of the situation, and although he is not a practising Catholic, no less in the future than in the past is he likely to underestimate the influence of the Vatican and the Royal Family. It may be, therefore, that religion will become a determining factor in the choice of the road that Italy will take when she comes to the parting of the ways.

*(b) National Socialism in Germany*

In Germany the situation has developed very differently from that in Italy. The National Socialist movement initiated by Adolf Hitler at

Munich in 1920, although, like Italian Fascism, a product of unstable conditions which arose out of the Great War, was primarily an attempt to reverse the judgement of Versailles. The dynamic, therefore, has been ethnological rather than political and economic, though, of course, it has had far-reaching effects on the structure of society as a whole. But the sense of defeat and national humiliation was the real driving force behind the Nazi Party which eventually gave it supreme power and raised its Leader to the unique position he occupies in the country, and indeed in the destiny of the civilized world. What class consciousness was to Marx and Lenin, and national sentiment was to Mussolini, pride of race was to Hitler and his followers. The German people must be vindicated, the stain of war guilt and the injustices they had suffered must be removed, and victimization made to cease. His concern, therefore, was with the defeated nation as a whole, not with any particular section of it. His immediate connexions were with organized Socialism, and he owed a good deal of his success to his anti-Capitalism, but he was equally opposed to and by Communism. His outlook, however, was that of the small tradesman rather than of the worker in organized industry, and in the early stages of his career he drew much support from the lower middle classes.

When at length he attained to the Chancellorship in 1933 and in the following year, after the death of Hindenburg, combined this office with that of the Presidency as Reichs-Führer, he proceeded to put into operation in all its completeness the policy outlined in *Mein Kampf*. This involved not only the abandonment of parliamentary government in favour of a dictatorship but the development of a race-consciousness by a drastic suppression of all alien elements in the nation.

In the formulation of the "Aryan hypothesis" as a myth of the sacred blood, the German people were alleged to be virtually a homogeneous race of Nordics, regardless of the fact that they represent actually a mixed stock with a very considerable proportion of broad-headed Alpines. In East Prussia and other districts in the north, and in the Neckar valley in Württemberg, the bulk of the population is long-headed, tall and fair, thereby revealing the chief characteristics of the Nordic division of mankind. This, however, is neither the peculiarity of Germany as a whole nor is it restricted to the Reich. By the Nordic race is meant the group of people having these common physical features comprising such Northern Europeans as the Scandinavians, Dutch, Flemings, North Germans, and a section of Russians (cf. Cossacks), English and Scotch.

Since a tall type with a very long, narrow, high head, or a moderately long head, has been found in graves belonging to the end of the Palæolithic and to the Bronze Age in the steppe of South Russia, it is thought to be not improbable that the Nordic ancestry is very ancient, the stock having made its way into the Western Baltic region in the latter part of the third millennium B.C. There it developed a warrior culture, using as its principal weapons stone battle-axes. Throughout the ages this type has revealed military genius and essentially masculine qualities. In passing southwards it mingled with Alpines and formed the basis of the population of North Germany, Poland and the neighbouring regions in the vicinity of the North Sea, retaining its blondness and height of stature, but with varying degrees of dolichocephaly (long-headedness) and brachycephaly (broad-headedness). It also preserved its militancy and steadfastness of purpose, which enabled it to become a dominant influence in Europe. Its powers of organization proved to be a valuable social asset, but having a "one-track mind" the Nordic has been usually an individualist incapable of seeing any point of view but his own.

This doubtless in some measure explains why Protestantism at the Reformation made more headway in the North than among the Alpine and Mediterranean peoples of the centre and south, who

have always been less individualistic, critical and metaphysical in outlook—"extraverts" as opposed to the Nordic "introverts"—a distinction noticeable in Germany in the case of the Protestant Prussians and the Catholic Bavarians. But there are also historical and geographical causes. Northern Germany was too remote from the original home of civilization in the Eastern Mediterranean, and largely enveloped in thick forest growth, to be influenced except locally by the migrations of culture that spread northwards along the Atlantic littoral and up the Danube to the Elbe and the Rhine. Before the arrival of Julius Cæsar in Gaul, the German and Celtic tribes beyond the Rhine were still in a relatively primitive state of culture, and the spread of Roman civilization was interrupted by the barbarian conflicts between the peoples of the hills and of the plains, till the establishment of the monasteries during the early Middle Ages restored contacts with Mediterranean civilization.

With the break-up of the Western Empire the region returned to its tribal state with the Frankish supremacy, except among the Saxons between the Rhine and the Elbe, who remained pagans. Indeed, while a few traces of Roman Christianity lingered in the Rhine valley and in Southern Germany, despite the efforts of the Frankish kings and the Irish missionaries, the greater part of the

country refused to become obedient to the Faith. It remained for St. Boniface to convert Bavaria and Thuringia in the first half of the eighth century, and with the victory of the Franks over the Saxons by the armies of Charlemagne, the whole German people became nominally Christian. But the rural North was never as completely Romanized as the urban South, and in the attempt to set up the Papal Empire, Germany and its imperial leaders were invariably the principal obstacle. Weakened theologically by the Hussite movement, and on the intellectual side by the influence of the Renaissance in the Universities, it required only the monetary extortions of Leo X to bring about the collapse of Catholicism.

The northern plain and the foothill region became solidly Protestant, but the people of the hill and valley country in the South in the Upper Danube basin continued their allegiance to the Papacy. On the Rhine Roman influence retained for the Church the Ems district, but Protestantism captured the South along the Cassel-Frankfort line, and the country around Württemberg and Nurnberg. Before the Germanizing process had crossed the Oder, Christianity had passed down the Vistula carrying the Roman tradition into East Prussia in the Slavonic area, which was Christianized for the most part from Bohemia prior to German influence.

The subsequent Germanization accounts for its secession from the Church at the Reformation, so that to-day the majority of East Prussians among the Maurian Lakes are Polish-speaking Protestants, but on the coastal plain German-speaking. Poland remained predominantly Catholic, though the Polonized peasants in White Russia and the Ukraine retained their Byzantine character, distinct from that of the Catholic Poles in the west.

With this complex ethnological, linguistic and religious background it was inevitable that the recent attempts to re-make the German nation would take a very different form from that in the homogeneous Mediterranean region. In the Germanic North Christianity and its precursors have never been the vital element and consolidating force in the national life to the same extent as in Italy. Consequently, in the development of a racial policy the Nordic Golden Age is a pagan warrior culture when sturdy Viking raiders plundered the coasts of Western Europe, and uncouth blond dolichocephalic tribes with their battle-axes migrated westwards and southwards and assimilated the Slavs east of the Elbe ; so different from the grandeur that was Rome superimposed on the glory that was Greece, transformed by ages of Christian civilization. Moreover, the fact that Germany has achieved unity at a late date, and comprises peoples of different stocks,

has complicated the ethnological interpretations of racialism, confusing language, blood, soil and culture. Thus, until quite recently Slav was spoken in the immediate vicinity of Berlin, and from Mecklenberg to Saxony, east of the Elbe, Slavonic place-names are of common occurrence.

To speak of the conglomeration of Nordics, Alpines, Slavs and Celts as a pure race is manifestly absurd, if by race is meant a biological grouping of human types with certain well-marked features in common,<sup>1</sup> such as shape of the head, face and nose, colour of the skin, texture of the hair, stature, and similar criteria. On this basis of classification the Swedes, for example, represent a homogeneous division of the Nordic race, while the Bavarians are as typically Alpine as the other Celtic linguistic group. It was only gradually that the Nordic element in the Celtic-speaking peoples became more and more predominant, so that by the first century B.C. the Belgæ were mistaken by Roman writers for pure Nordics. Originally, they arose out of an intermixture of Nordics and Alpines, like the Achæans who destroyed the Minoan civilization in Crete.

Language, however, though an important consolidating element in human grouping, is not of itself a criterion of race, just as nationality ethnologically is an artificial grouping of peoples based

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. C. Haddon, *The Races of Man* (Cambridge, 1924), p. 1.



on historical circumstances, geographical environment and political and other cultural traits. Thus, there is an English language, a British nation and a British Empire but not a British race. And the same is true of Germany. On the other hand, the Semitic-speaking peoples of Arabia, Palestine and the North African littoral (Arabs and Jews) do constitute a linguistic family which coincides with an ethnic division. Conversely, the Indo-European, or Aryan, tongues, though presenting some similarities which unite Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Germanic and Slavonic languages in a common type of speech, racially distributed they cover very diverse ethnological groups. It is therefore a misnomer to speak of an "Aryan Race," unless the term is confined to the original inhabitants of Iran who called themselves Aryas, and their Indian and Iranian descendants.

The misuse of the words "race," "nationality" and "language" has been responsible for much of the recent political unrest in Europe, and the fact that the Jews, like the Gipsies, do represent a distinct ethnological and linguistic group with certain well-defined traits has given some credence to the unfortunate "Aryan hypothesis" of Renan and Max Müller,<sup>1</sup> which now has been revived by Hitler

<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that Max Müller subsequently realized his error, and in 1888 he explained that "Aryas are those who speak Aryan languages, whatever their colour, whatever their blood

with such disastrous results. In its present guise Anti-Semitism has become in a measure linked with the conflict with Christianity inasmuch as Jews and Christians tend to be regarded almost equally as enemies of the new politico-religious mysticism. Not only is Christianity a derivative of Judaism, but it is also an international organization—an intrusive element in Nordic civilization from Palestine and the Mediterranean, with catholic aims and outlook—incompatible with the Nazi so-called philosophy of *Weltanschauung*.

The *Kulturkampf*, or open conflict between two incompatible conceptions of life, began as soon as the régime was established in 1933, despite the Concordat with the Vatican and the influence of Herr Von Papen, himself a Catholic, who saw no essential opposition between national pride and religious faith. But what he failed to recognize was that, unlike Fascism, Nazism from the beginning was virtually a "religion": a mystical neo-paganism based on a philosophy of blood, race and soil. This became apparent the following year

In calling them Aryas we predicate nothing of them except—that the grammar of their language is Aryan." Moreover, he affirmed again his previous declaration that by the term Aryas he meant "neither blood nor bones, nor hair, nor skull," but merely the language spoken. "An ethnologist who speaks of Aryan race, Aryan blood, Aryan eyes and hair, is as great a sinner as a linguist who speaks of a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar." (Max Müller, *Biographies of Words and the Home of the Aryas*. (London: 1888, pp. 245, 120.)

with the appointment of Rosenberg as plenipotentiary for *Weltanschauung*. From then onwards relations between the Third Reich and both the Church and Lutheranism rapidly deteriorated. Catholic schools and Youth Associations have been suppressed, priests and pastors have been sent to concentration camps, bishops have been violently attacked and the churches deprived of every means of defence. Even Cardinal Innitzer, who welcomed the Anschluss publicly, like the Bishop of Salzburg, has been unable to escape the onslaughts of ardent Nazis.

Thus, the myth of the sacred blood is hardly a less serious challenge than the dialectical materialism of the Marxists since it rejects not only the cardinal doctrines of the Faith, but undermines the foundations of the Christian religion itself. For Rosenberg and his followers, not Palestine but Germany is the Holy Land, and "the pre-requisite of all German education is the acknowledgement that it is not Christendom which has brought us civilization (*Gesittung*), but that Christianity owes its lasting values to the Germanic character." To such a travesty of history and the religion of the Incarnation neither Catholic nor Lutheran can possibly give assent, however much he may desire to show his gratitude to the Führer and the Nazi movement for all they have accomplished in the regeneration of

Germany. In the development of Nazism, however, nearly all cultural and Christian influences are being eliminated, while the youth, having been nurtured in an increasingly pagan environment, for the most part appear to have lost all respect for religion and the older social sanctions. The drift towards Russia, and the suppression of the more conservative elements in all spheres of influence, can hardly fail to hasten the process of paganization with the inevitable consequences in the disintegration of society.

(c) *The Turkish National Movement*

In Turkey the dictatorship created by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1923 in adopting a nationalist policy also completely secularized the State. The Caliphate, the Commissariat of *sheria* (the religious administration) and *eykaff* (pious foundations) were abolished in 1924, and all educational institutions brought under the control of the commissariat of Public Instruction. The Religious Orders were disbanded, the monasteries closed, and the wearing of hats in place of the fez (the national Moslem head-dress) was made obligatory. The seclusion and veiling of women were abandoned, together with polygamy and other Islamic customs. In place of the Qur'anic legislature of *sheria* a new civil code was introduced based on Western legal

practice. The religious courts were suppressed and a new judicial system was devised with qualified judges and advocates to administer it trained along modern Western lines. In every department, in short, a breach with tradition was made, so that the new Turkish Nationalist State has cut itself off completely from its Moslem moorings.

Islam being the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, Kemal Pasha realized that only by freeing the State from religion could a new Turkey be brought into being. Thus, in such an apparently trivial matter as the substitution of the Western hat for the traditional fez, the purpose of the change was not merely to Westernize male attire. In making the prescribed prostrations at the daily recitation of the Salat in the mosques, a hat with a brim rendered it impossible to touch the forehead on the ground, and so prevented the proper performance of these religious exercises. The abolition of polygamy and the changes in the laws governing marriage, divorce, the position of women and inheritance were an affront to the Qur'anic legislature, while the deposition of the Ottoman Caliphate destroyed the hope of a universal Moslem rule combining spiritual and temporal power over the pan-Islamic world.

Side by side with these far-reaching reforms and revolutions, a vigorous nationalist policy was being pursued having as its object the reversal of the

fortunes of the Great War and the development of a "pure race." Non-Turkish elements, whether Greeks, Kurds or Armenians, were driven forth as ruthlessly as have been the Jews from Germany. The expulsion of the Kurds in 1925 in defiance of the League of Nations nearly involved Great Britain in war with Turkey, but an amicable agreement in the following year prevented a conflict at the eleventh hour. Meanwhile, the revolt of the Kurds in Eastern Anatolia had been suppressed and the Nationalist government made the insurrection an excuse for a further extension of secularization. But the exodus of the Greeks and Armenians removed a section of the population skilled in commerce and finance, which necessitated the reorganization and development of Turkish industry, and the creation of large-scale public works, the erection of factories and the industrialization of a people hitherto mainly engaged in agriculture.

The amazing achievements of the Kemalist régime in carrying out a constitutional programme are probably unique in the history of the modern world, inasmuch as the Turkish dictator turned defeat into victory in the face of firmly established religious sanctions within the community, and the opposition of foreign capitalism and international finance from without. As in Germany, this was brought about by the alliance of the Army and the

Popular Party, though in Turkey the Bolsheviks were allies instead of being "the enemy." Furthermore, despite the hold that Islam had on the country, the people had come to regard the Caliphate and the Islamic heritage as a hindrance to national development. It only remained for the Nationalists to invent a racial legend about the Turanian ancestry of the people of the steppes, analogous to the German Aryan myth, to represent Islam as a foreign accretion like Christianity in Nordic Europe. Actually the Turanian conquerors of the Near East proved singularly ineffectual in their attempts to establish a settled culture on the indigenous nomadic population, but for the purposes of the myth the story sufficed. Henceforth, the new Turkey has faced Westwards and turned its back on Mecca and its long and honourable history as the champion of the Crescent. What the future holds for the once famous Ottoman Empire is in the lap of the gods, but the Westernization of Turkey can hardly fail to have far-reaching effects on the Moslem world and the secularization of society.

#### *(d) Nationalism in Spain*

In Spain, on the other hand, the Nationalist movement arose in great measure as an attempt to stem the rapidly advancing tide of anti-clericalism,

Marxism and Anarchism which in 1936 threatened to envelop the country and thereby destroy an essential element in Iberian culture. From the Moors and the Crusaders Spain has inherited a dual civilization permeated with religious fervour, so that the Church is a consubstantial part of the nation. It was under the influence of the legend of Santiago de Compostela that the battle-cry was raised, *Santiago y cierra España*, which put to flight the armies of the Moorish invaders ; it was St. James of Compostela, mounted on a white horse and bearing a white banner marked with a red cross and carrying the sword of victory, who was the inspiration alike of warriors and mystics, painters and poets, voyagers and missionaries ; it was with the hallowed name of their Patron Saint on their lips that Spaniards all down the ages have suffered and died in faith and peace. Even amid all the bustle of the twentieth century, modern mechanized civilization has been only a veneer in the medieval seclusion of the Peninsula. Cars might pass through the ancient gates of Toledo, or thread their way along the narrow streets of Santiago, and electric light illuminate many a primitive dwelling in remote villages in Cantabria, or the Basque provinces, but the nightly cry of the serenos, " Hail, Mary ! twelve o'clock and all serene," is the echo of the heart of Spain.



It is hardly surprising, therefore, in a land of individualists, 75 per cent. of whom are peasant agriculturists as devoted to their traditional faith in all its medieval simplicity as they are rooted in the soil, that strong opposition was encountered to the anti-religious policy of the Republican-Socialist Revolutionary Movement which largely controlled the country after the fall of the monarchy in 1931. The burning of churches and the abolition of church schools, which had provided education for half of the children of Spain, without any adequate provision being made for the carrying on of instruction, were bitterly resented, especially by the women, though it is true to say that the Religious Orders were definitely unpopular. That some of them were well endowed cannot be denied, but in common fairness it must be said that since the confiscations in 1812 and 1831 the charge of vast wealth and luxurious living levied against the Church and the clergy generally is without foundation. Thus, the income of the Primate before the civil war was in sterling about £1,500, out of which he had to meet his official expenses, while more than three thousand of the inferior secular clergy received less than £50 per annum. As Professor Allison Peers says, speaking from a competent knowledge as an outsider, "the true power and the true riches of the Spanish Church are those which are of the kind that

no man can take from it : the millions who worship with an intensity and a regularity hard to parallel, and the thousands who live saintly lives of contemplation." This is as profoundly true as is the fact that it cannot be held responsible for the outbreak of armed resistance, however much it may have thrown its weight on the side of its champions once hostilities had begun.

The civil war was the result of a series of antecedent causes, the chief of which unquestionably was the inability of any party to form a stable government capable of maintaining law and order. The fruitless Communist rebellion in Asturias in 1934—estimated to have cost the revolutionaries over a million pounds sterling—was succeeded by the destruction of no less than 170 churches, 69 clubs and the offices of 10 newspapers in the months immediately preceding the war, after the victory of the Popular Front in February 1936. By the beginning of July the prisons were full to overflowing with thousands who had been arrested as "Fascist" suspects, though actually in Spain the Fascist movement was not strong. Thus, both Gil Robles, the Catholic leader of the Popular Party, and Calvo Sotelo, the champion of the Monarchists, repudiated it.

In the prevailing state of tension, it only remained for shots to be fired on a crowd leaving a Socialist

meeting at the Casa del Pueblo in Madrid on July 4th to precipitate the crisis. Eight days later Jose Castillo, a lieutenant of the *Guardia de Asalto* (shock troops), was shot in a street in Madrid. Thereupon by way of reprisal the monarchist Señor Calvo Sotelo was arrested and murdered without trial. The outrage acted as fire to tinder. Both sides had long been making their plans for the inevitable conflict, and the stage was now ready and waiting for the curtain to be rung up on the great Spanish tragedy which has become one of the chief centres of interest in a troubled world for the last three years, dividing the spectators into two camps almost as violently opposed as the actual actors in the drama.

On both sides there have been phenomenal courage, tenacity, heroism, devotion to duty, disinterestedness coupled with intense cruelty ; and in no country are the heights and depths of violent partisanship displayed to quite so marked a degree. This bitterness doubtless has been increased by the lamentable intervention of foreign powers to the Left and the Right—Russia and the International Brigade on the one side, and Italy and Germany on the other. But nevertheless, as Don Salvador de Madariaga has pointed out, “in actual fact, the Spanish tragedy would have occurred even if neither Lenin nor Mussolini had existed ; its forms are genuinely national, and it may even be said that

many of its tragic and, in a sense, insoluble, aspects arise out of that untranslatable residue of 'Spanishness' which knows neither Fascism nor Communism."

At the moment *Nueva España* can hardly be said to have come to the birth despite the travail of the last three years. In its present embryonic state the Caudillo is endeavouring to fashion an organism designed to bring into being the political and economic programme envisaged by the Nationalist movement. To this end a small Political Junta of the National Council under the control of Don Ramon Serrano Suñer, the brother-in-law of General Franco, has been formed as the link between the Phalanx (Falange) and the Government. If this new organization gives the Fascist element as represented by the Falangists—unquestionably the most dynamic force in Spain to-day—the determining voice in the counsels of the nation, the Generalissimo has been careful to keep absolute powers in his own hands. As Chief of the State, President of the Supreme Council of Defence, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, he holds the reins firmly, and he has defined the functions of the Falange as being "to establish an economic régime superior to the interests of individual, group or class, for the multiplication of wealth in the service of the State, of social justice, and of the Christian liberty of the

individual." Moreover, while Señor Suñer, who is an alumnus of the university of Bologna, looks to Italy for his inspiration, and has been in favour of a closer alliance with the "Axis powers," he is himself a devout Catholic. In his recent audience with the Pope he was careful to ascertain the modifications which would have to be made in a constitution based on an Italian model to avoid conflict with the Christian doctrine of the religious independence of the individual. It would seem, therefore, that he is anxious to avoid friction with the Church and the traditionalists so far as possible.

Nevertheless, the Falange Española Tradicionalista is regarded with the gravest suspicion in conservative and ecclesiastical circles where totalitarian methods and ideas are recognized to be completely out of accord with Spanish tradition and practice. Indeed, differences of outlook and policy among the parties to the Right sunk during the war are now reappearing in their true light, and it is futile to pretend that a satisfactory working compromise has yet been reached among the diametrically opposed groups. The present writer has just returned from a post-war visit to the Peninsula, and the general impression left on his mind is that of a minority sovereign rule struggling to maintain law and order against a series of opposing forces. There are few indications of Fascism, in either its

Italian or German form, at present visible, whatever may be in contemplation behind the scenes. As things are at the moment, *Nueva España* is the old Spain in different clothes displaying a great variety of pattern and colour. The conflicting political forces of former times remain in the background little changed except in name. With Catholic monarchists, aristocratic conservatives and anti-clerical National-socialist revolutionaries all struggling for the mastery, a state of tension, emergency and universal suspicion is bound to prevail, necessitating a drastic system of censorship and stringent military control deeply resented by a nation of happy-go-lucky individualists. Unlike the German, the Spaniard does not find regimentation stimulating, and chafes under restrictions governing his movements and food supply. For him a perpetual diet of brown bread is as nauseating as the red sacrilege from which he has been delivered. Both he regards equally as *muy malo*, though he displays almost superhuman patience with the perfectly impossible conditions of the wholly inadequate means of transport and communication which, though second nature to him, would not be tolerated by any other country in Western Europe.

These, however, are early days (a fact that seems to have escaped the notice of a considerable section of the population), and General Franco, with

characteristic Galician prudence and sagacity, is feeling his way step by step towards a new order. He himself stands outside all political factions, and undoubtedly he has caught the popular imagination, though the murdered José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Falange, is also the hero of the moment. With the transfer to Spain of the Spanish gold held in France until recently, and the purchase of large supplies of cotton from America and Egypt to set in motion the idle Catalanian mills, many of the existing material evils doubtless will be removed. If corresponding progress can be made in the unification of opposing factions the future of this great country may reasonably be regarded as assured. Not only is Spanish culture deeply laid in antiquity but it has as a consolidating force a powerful spiritual dynamic. Primarily the Spaniard is a Catholic, and in so far as the Nationalist movement as a whole, in spite of its internal divisions and external interventions, has been able to secure and retain the allegiance of such very different and politically opposed groups, it has been because it has taken its stand on the maintenance of the true ethos of the nation. The seven parties which composed the Republican government failed to hold together, even in the presence of a common foe, because individually and collectively they lacked this unifying indefinable urge. The Spaniard

looks askance at Rome, but the aims and ideals of Moscow are entirely foreign and anathema to his traditional soul, however attractive they may be to certain intellectuals, and among groups in industrial centres. But these exceptions are not representative of the real Spain.

This brief analysis of the situation is based on personal observations in the country extending over fifteen years, and if it is substantially correct, the future of Spain will be determined by the success or failure of Church and State to work together in the building up of a new civilization in accordance with the spiritual traditions of the land. If a common faith inherited through countless ages can prove to be capable of adapting itself to present-day and future requirements, both theological and sociological, so as to become the consolidating force holding together Castilian and Catalanian, Galician and Andalusian, Falangist, Requetes, and Monarchist, Nationalist and Republican, liberal and reactionary, Spain has yet something of vital importance to contribute to a stricken world, and her recent sufferings will not have been without avail.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD

Our tale is told, but we have yet to consider what is to be the place of religion in this strange and puzzling new world which is opening out before us. In the past, as we have seen, the dynamic of all sound social life has always been a vigorous faith in the beneficent workings of a benign Providence. Is this to continue to be the centre and core of society, or is it to be abandoned in favour of one or other of the political and economic movements which are striving for the mastery, or of some new form of secular Humanism, Pragmatism and Logical Positivism? One thing at least seems to be certain, viz. that the great age of Liberalism and individualism has passed, and so far as the immediate present and future are concerned, for good or for ill, we have to visualize a return to the Church type of State. If religion is to make its life explicit amid all the currents and cross-currents of the modern world, it will have to function in the immediate future in an environment more like that in which it arose than that to which in recent years it has become accustomed.

In primitive states of culture society is essentially

a sacred order in which human beings are regarded as an integral whole bound together in a community by collective action directed to specific corporate ends. Moreover, private opinion and individualism are virtually non-existent, because it is recognized that if disintegration is to be avoided solidarity of thought as well as of action must be preserved at all costs. This is indispensable for the maintenance of ethical conduct since only when every member of a group knows what society requires of him and fashions his life accordingly, is a universal standard possible. But for moral sanctions and social co-operation to be effective an ultimate reference which transcends society is required. Thus, as Professor Malinowski says, "religion standardises the right way of thinking and acting and society takes up the verdict and repeats it in unison."<sup>1</sup> Myth and ritual are means to this end, as has been demonstrated, giving a supernatural precedent for the existing order as a living reality of a primeval revelation. Belief, practice and conduct, in short, are inseparable, and, therefore, no distinction can be drawn between man in his social relations, and man in his religious reactions.

<sup>1</sup> *Science, Religion and Reality* (London, 1926), p. 63.

*Empiricism and Progress*

These have been the principles underlying the development of society in ancient and medieval times till the growth of individualism gave rise to modern Capitalism and the metaphysical idealism of the Romantic age, together with the Positivism which succeeded it. Religion then became either the enemy to be combated in the great struggle with social evils, or an ally to be used to give ethical content to the new gospel of progress. For both friend and foe, however, the kingdom to be set up was not only in but of this world—the achievement of a self-mastery of the forces of nature rather than the self-conquest of the soul in a perfected humanity. The modern man, be he Marxist, Capitalist, Positivist or Idealist, was not troubling about his soul or his sins. His mission in life was to be up and doing; setting and keeping in motion the whirling wheels of a mechanistic age, and the making of more and more laws for the betterment of mankind. The kingdom of God was to be taken by the force of social activity, scientific knowledge and beneficent legislature. Thereby the redemption of the world would be wrought along evolutionary lines.

Then came the great disillusionment of 1914, and in the turmoil of the succeeding years all the old

optimism of a self-complacent age has rapidly disappeared. Gone everywhere is the worship of the idea of humanity and the logical sequence of ascending values. If any principle is to be deduced from an evolutionary universe in which only the fittest have any reasonable chance of survival, for many it is that of sceptical pragmatism. The gospel of progress has become a philosophical pessimism with the ever-receding goal of an historical process ending in involution—the return of the world and all its achievements, physical, biological and human, to the unconscious inorganic mass out of which the phenomenal order arose.

Even in the domain of knowledge, the old triumphant assurance which characterized scientific thought has now undergone a profound change. Thus, in place of the former objective certainties of Newtonian physics, we are confronted with a mysterious universe in which the theoretical system built up on long-accepted and duly verified scientific facts appears to be only of relative application. Gravity from being a force has become a property of space, and Nature is now seen to behave as though no hypothetical ether existed. All our clocks and standards of measurement are apparently variable and relative to the conditions governing this planet, so that in the real world underlying all the manifestations we experience in time and space,

things are actually very different from the way they appear to us with our geocentric outlook. We simply form our own conceptions of time, space and motion relative to our position in the universe, so that in a sense we are living in a "looking-glass world." Again, in the bewildering complexity of the ultimate nature of matter, modern research has reached a domain of law of a type hitherto unrecognized in the locomotion of the molecule or the atom, and which is of such an abstract nature that it can only be expressed concretely by means of symbols.

To-day the physicist, quite as much as the biologist, economist, philosopher and theologian, lives in a world of uncertainties, of fabrications of the human mind to express, as well as it is able, imperfectly understood fundamental principles and their reactions. The most exact sciences in their theoretical bases have now lost the finality that formerly seemed to be firmly established, while the practical application of scientific knowledge to everyday affairs has proved to be capable of destructive as well as beneficent uses. When Satan casts out Satan his kingdom cannot stand. This is the present position of scientific civilization in a super-mechanized age.

*Pragmatism*

At the end of the last century the apotheosis of science, as it found expression in Positivism, was seen to be in reality a human construction, variable and relative. In its place, a new type of empiricism arose under the inspiration of William James and F. C. S. Schiller, which was content to regard the most assured conclusions of the scientific method merely as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience and fuller knowledge of facts.<sup>1</sup> Ideas are true in so far as they correspond to reality, but only an omniscient mind could hope to perceive absolute truth. Therefore, according to the pragmatists, the function of science is to supply a method whereby certain practical results may be obtained which are true within a given range of knowledge and experience. This makes truth subordinate to practice, which is the criterion of both life and reason. Species have survived, it is contended, because they have chosen to adapt themselves to their environment and attain permanence by collaborating with the forces of nature. No immutable laws exist to this end, and some forms do in fact suffer extinction.

Similarly, with regard to theoretical propositions. In the light of the recent researches of Einstein and his colleagues the postulates of Euclidean geometry

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. James, *The Will to Believe* (London, 1897), pp. 7 f.



and Newtonian physics, while applicable to certain conditions of time and space, can no longer be regarded as absolute statements of fact. For the practical purposes of plate-layers it suffices to assume that two parallel straight lines produced to any length in a given area remain equidistant apart, but as a theoretical statement of absolute fact the postulate requires some modification. It is now affirmed, in the light of certain experimental data, that if the rails could be extended indefinitely they would meet owing to the alleged curvature of space. But this latest interpretation of the facts may be superseded in its turn by a further modification of the original hypothesis as the evidence accumulates, such is the relativity of knowledge. Hence the Pragmatist argument that truth is conditioned by the facts available and constructed by the human mind, and it is validated by the practical uses to which it can be placed.

It was along these lines that Catholic Modernists, notably in France, sought to interpret the mysteries of the Faith. As the sciences base their conclusions on hypotheses which meet the needs of life relative to circumstances, so the Church, it was argued, maintains metaphysical principles and theological doctrines essential to the ethical and spiritual well-being of mankind because they have permanent value apart from their actual veracity in ultimate

reality. As provisional hypotheses the dogmas of Christianity suffice for practical purposes, and, therefore, they are sufficient as a guide to conduct and spiritual experience, as has been attested by their fruits throughout the ages. If the faithful find in the sacraments the sense of release from the bondage of sin and renewal of grace, and strength to enable them to go forth with courage and security on life's thorny path, these are facts independent of the theories concerning the precise way in which the results are effected. Thus, Le Roy maintained that a dogma is a rule of conduct, not a knowledge of objective truth. Consequently, the Christian is left perfectly free to interpret the Faith as he pleases provided that the explanation does not conflict with the practical rules based on the doctrines.

Now it cannot be denied that under existing conditions of time and space we can know only in part, and in a measure the perception of truth is relative to the limitations of the finite mind. On the other hand, as the Pragmatists contended against intellectualism, God is not so "wholly other" as to be completely outside ourselves; a hypostasis of abstractions. But, nevertheless, by appealing to intuition, to action, as to non-rational powers, distinct from intelligence, the Modernists did not escape from subjectivism. There was no guarantee that behind

the mystic and sacramental experiences lay any ultimate reality and objective revelation. To substitute the criterion of social utility and ethical and religious demands does not meet the case because many strange and fantastic ideas have served and still serve these purposes without having any basis in reality.

To say with Le Roy that the doctrine of the resurrection merely means that Christ must be treated as though He were alive as He was before the crucifixion, is wholly inadequate as a practical interpretation of the Christian dogma, and a perversion of intellectual truth. Either our Lord was or He was not raised from the dead by an act of God in vindication of His claims to have conquered sin and death by His atoning self-offering. If these assertions are devoid of any historical basis in fact, no demands of the spiritual life can make them anything but misstatements of historical truth.

### *Religious Truth*

Religious doctrines, like scientific hypotheses, cannot be separated from the intellectual interpretation of reality, however relative may be our knowledge of the Absolute. The truths of one age may be superseded by those of the next, but a distinction has to be made between principles and applications; the one of permanent and abiding truth, the other

of transient, or at least provisional, validity. Thus, the progress of scientific research and the critical investigation of the Scriptures, together with the comparative study of religious phenomena, have thrown a flood of new light on the Bible and historic Christianity, so that it is now possible to determine, at any rate in general outline, what may be regarded reasonably as having been revealed once and for all, from what is of temporary significance to meet the passing needs of a particular time or culture. Moreover, even the great body of truth about God and man which lies behind the Christian Faith has to be made real in life, interpreted and expressed to meet the requirements of each successive age. Nothing can hope to survive permanently the truth of which is incapable of sound defence. If Christianity is to maintain its claims to be the final revelation of God to man it must be able to show that its fundamental doctrines are illuminated by rather than in conflict with new knowledge as it accumulates.

In the enunciation of the Faith through human instruments it is impossible to exclude all possibility of error, for, apart from limitations of knowledge, those of language may make this impracticable, words and phrases being capable of many different meanings, according as they are used in an orthodox or a heterodox sense, or are interpreted literally or

metaphorically. Thus, to assert that man is made in the image and likeness of his Creator may have an anthropomorphic significance in one state of culture and a highly spiritual and ethical meaning in another. Or, again, to affirm that Christ ascended into heaven may be understood spatially or in reference to a spiritual condition. In common speech we still employ pre-scientific terms, as, for example, when we refer to the sun "rising" and "setting," and religion speaks the normal language of mankind which is based on the relativity of common experience. In dealing with matters that lie outside present experience we are forced to use metaphorical language, as in the session of Christ at the right hand of God.

Since in God alone is the plenitude of knowledge, in revealing to man the divine purpose and activity in this world, fallible, human terms and agencies must be employed. Furthermore, truth can only be imparted progressively as it can be received and perceived in a world in evolution. Even standards of conduct are relative to existing conditions, as, for instance, in the case of slavery which at one time was condoned and later condemned as wholly unjustifiable and positively evil. The contents of the moral law have changed from age to age, as is apparent in the Bible where in the Decalogue (Ex. xx. 5 ; Deut. v. 9) the sins of the parents are said

to be visited upon their children to the fourth generation, whereas Ezekiel declares that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (xviii. 20). Later, our Lord does not hesitate to criticize the current interpretation of the Law and to substitute a higher code for many of the earlier requirements. Again, the civil and canonical legislature embodied in the Talmud represents a development that is said to have occupied a thousand years of Jewish life to produce as a supplement to the Pentateuch. Discussion followed discussion as each point was examined by the Rabbis in the light of the traditional evidence, till ultimately the Mishna emerged about A.D. 200 as a collection of cases and decisions governing every phase of Jewish conduct. Since it was held that the Mishna, as the Oral Law, was communicated to Moses on Mount Sinai when the Torah (Written Law) was delivered, it was regarded as having virtually the same divine authority, having been passed on through Aaron and the Sanhedrim to future generations to guard and preserve the Scriptural injunctions.

As there is no infallible guide in matters of morals in the Bible or the individual conscience, since what is regarded at one time as absolutely forbidden, at another period may be condoned or even encouraged, so theology has undergone development and change. The Old Testament is manifestly a

progressive revelation, and equally in the New Dispensation the credal content of Christianity was only gradually formulated, just as it was by some such gradual method that the books which were to form the new section of Canonical Scriptures were selected and assembled.

At a very early period a tradition concerning the person and message of the Founder of the new society became established and rapidly assumed a permanent form. Behind the literary records there seems to be certain oral "forms" which may be grouped under such general headings as the "preaching" (κήρυγμα), or "Gospel of Christ," and the "teaching" (διδασχὴ), or "Law of Christ"; but while these represent the main tradition, the Apostolic Church was by no means free from highly contentious questions in presenting its message to the world. Different communities appear to have had their own customs, and no small stir was caused about the enforcement of the rite of circumcision in the case of Gentile converts (Acts xv., Gal. ii.). Indeed, the Judaizing party persisted in spite of the decision of the Council of Jerusalem. In later ages when a clearly defined theology had crystallized out of the early fluid tradition, and the oral "forms" had become Canonical Scriptures, controversial issues by no means ceased. For 400 years the Church tried to

think out the problem of the Christ of history and of faith in the light of the philosophy of the age, and when at length it arrived at the Chalcedonian definition in 451, other problems soon arose, such as the rival interpretations of the doctrine of grace and freewill, with their repercussions on the thought and practice of the sixteenth century.

In all these movements, not to mention the Scholastic disputations, although appeal was made to the inerrancy of Scripture, Conciliar decrees and Papal pronouncements, there was in fact no finality or infallibility. The contending parties one and all accepted in theory the divine authority of religious truth, but in practice they were far from being in agreement as to how it was to be ascertained. None would have denied that the words of Scripture were the revelation of God, but in what particular sense the revealed Word was to be understood and interpreted was a matter of acute controversy. The Church, of course, claimed to be the living voice of Christ, and in Western Christendom it spoke through its visible head on earth in the person of the occupant of the Holy See. If this was challenged at the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the claim was re-asserted by the Counter-Reformation, though it was not until 1870 that the Vatican Council formulated œcumenically *de fide* that when the Roman pontiff teaches *ex cathedra* he "enjoys



by reason of the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer wished His Church to be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith and morals."

The motive of this definition was to provide a means of settling doubts and presenting the truth of the Faith in a final and incontestable form that does not admit of discussion. This was equally the intention of the Protestant Reformers who substituted an infallible Bible for an infallible Pope. The letter of Scripture with them was to silence difference of opinion just as the Roman ultramontane authority claimed to silence it by the spoken word of the Vicar of Christ. In principle there was no difference between the two in their approach to truth, and for certain types of mind, fundamentally sceptical and distrustful of reason, but desiring religious certitude, this method will always prove attractive, because, in the words of Pius XI, "it proposes a complete and easily understood teaching, immune, when it thus teaches, from all danger and error." It is, nevertheless, a false conception of truth, and when put to the test it involves a conflict of evidence which can never carry conviction to minds genuinely in search of reality and validity. Thus, for example, in a recent Papal Encyclical dealing with the Malines Conversations it was affirmed that "all who are truly Christ's believe the Conception of the

Mother of God without stain of original sin with the same faith as they believe the mystery of the August Trinity, and the Incarnation of our Lord, just as they do the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, according to the sense in which it was defined by the Œcumenical Council of the Vatican." This is perfectly logical because the Papal authority covers the whole field, but not a shred of genuine historical or Scriptural evidence exists in support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin as formulated by the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* of Pius IX on December 8th, 1854.

Authority as such can never be its own guarantee, and the facts of religion cannot be used to establish its own doctrines. Theological beliefs and dogmas, as distinct from spiritual experience, must be investigated on their own merits, critically, historically and comparatively, independent of any accepted loyalties and external authorities. That the great body of truth about God and man which lies behind the Gospel has been revealed is a fundamental postulate of the Christian religion, it is true, but the credibility of the Faith thus established rests on the available evidence. Moreover, while truth does not change, the mind is led into progressive understanding of it. Changing conditions demand new interpretations and applications

of it in order that it may be made real in life and expressed in a manner calculated to meet the needs of each successive age. Some truth is hidden because it cannot be understood at a given time, but when fuller knowledge is obtained it must not conflict with illumination from other sources.

### *The Philosophy of History*

In so far as the Christian Faith is bound up with particular historical events, the truth of the Gospel can be established only by a critical investigation of the available data, and not merely by appeals to Scriptural or ecclesiastical tradition. In the last analysis Christianity is neither a theology nor an ethical or philosophical system. Before all else it is a revelation of God in history; a divine act at a given moment in time and locality in space. It stands or falls on what happened in Palestine in the opening years of our era. No amount of pragmatic theologizing or philosophizing can avail if He Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate was other than He was claimed to be by those who saw in Him the central fact of history.

The Græco-oriental Mystery cults, examined in some detail in the foregoing pages, offered a way of salvation: a sacramental renewal of life and supernatural strength in this world and the next in union with a saviour-god who had died and been restored.

But notwithstanding certain marked similarities between these Mysteries and Christianity, there was one fundamental distinction which made just all the difference. Christianity affirmed that "the Man Christ Jesus" was at once an historical Figure and the Incarnate Lord from heaven in Whom dwelt the Godhead bodily. Starting from the Jewish conception that God guides and controls human destinies by judgement and deliverance through His mighty hand and outstretched arm, the Church boldly proclaimed that the final crisis had come. The divine self-disclosure in successive events had now reached its climax and fulfilment, for "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." In short, the kingdom of God had come in power and judgement and mercy.

In a dynamic universe continually undergoing change, activity is a universal phenomenon. In its broadest sense history presupposes that "there is something going on," and not merely that certain things happened in the past. The term, therefore, may refer to the actual events as a series, or to the record of the sequence. But it is only those events which have some permanent value and significance in relation to their totality that are remembered and recorded. A mere catalogue of events is not his-

tory. There must be also the apprehension and interpretation of occurrences, and these must have an interest and meaning for the community as a whole, or at least for a section of it, and not merely for isolated individuals. Furthermore, there must be some purpose in the events. In primitive society such happenings are recorded and given valuation in mythology and traditional sanctions, handed on orally from generation to generation by means of initiation and other ceremonies.

With the rise of civilization the invention of writing facilitated the keeping of contemporary records, and the production of archives and chronicles. This gave a new permanence to events. The writing of history involves the making of a selection of the available material with reference to a given thesis. In other words, the historian passes judgement upon the events he records, and assigns to them some specific meaning and purpose in relation to the experience of the present. Like the myth, history is a living reality, for events are selected from the great mass of happenings because they have influenced the world and human destinies in some way or another. It is not succession but significance that determines the choice.

Now if it be granted that God is the ground of a teleological universe in which all events are moving ultimately in a realm of ends, the revelation of

divine purpose must be discernible in the processes of history, though not necessarily in each and every occurrence, otherwise we should be committed to the Calvinistic doctrine of providential predestination, and the "pre-established harmony" in the "best of all possible worlds" of Leibniz. The principle of selection has to be applied in the valuation of events in their revelational content. The realization of values is the determining factor in a true estimate of history. Life, human and physical, pursues the even tenor of its ways till something happens in the course of events to produce a significant change; then an "emergence" occurs, bringing into play new creative powers. Progressive development is not a uniform continuous upward march towards a goal. There are always phases of retrogression on the one hand, and mutations, or "lifts," conditioned by external factors on the other. In this zigzag line of advance new species and new movements are continually arising as starting-points of fresh evolutionary processes, and if this involves a conflict of tendencies in the realization of values, a "cutting across of purpose by events," as Prof. Dodd would say, the working out of a divine plan is not thereby destroyed.

The Old Testament is the record of a teleological scheme through a series of divinely-ordered epochs which, despite repeated human failures and retro-

gressions, never ceased to move by slow and interrupted gradations to its appointed ends. At critical junctures something happened which gave a new direction to the course of history, be it the Exodus, the Conquest of Palestine, the Exile, the "abomination of desolations" under the Seleucids, or the Maccabæan revolt. To the penetrating eye of the prophet and seer significant events of this nature were part of the divine plan, and so they were described as "the mighty acts of Yahweh." But still the ultimate purpose was not fulfilled. Hence the rise of Messianic and Apocalyptic theology. The series of crises and emergences which characterize the Old Testament must at last reach their goal in the supreme crisis in the Day of the Lord. This would constitute the climax of history. The promise to Abraham—"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxvi. 4)—demanded a final crisis when "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Is. xl. 5).

Christian tradition points back to the historical reality of the life, death and resurrection of Christ as the event *par excellence* in which the divine purpose reached its conclusion. As the Messiah Jesus was an eschatological Figure Who gave meaning and significance in time and space to the Hebrew prophecies; as a supra-historical Personality He trans-

cended Judaism as the emergence of the divine on the plane of history. The Church which came into being to bear witness to this claim to the whole world, was not content to become merely the New Israel. It represented itself as a supernatural society in which the reign of God was an accomplished fact, not a future hope. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" because the kingdom had come with power as an historical reality (2 Cor. v. 17). The ancient death and resurrection culture pattern centring in the divine kingship and expressed in the Mystery cults acquired its true meaning as seen in its fulfilment as part of the redemptive process made actual throughout the ages in the Eucharistic drama as the central act of worship of redeemed humanity, who thereby become partakers of the new life in Christ. In fact, the whole complex of mythology which collected round the primary realities of human experience becomes intelligible and meaningful when brought into relation with the Christian interpretation of history revealed in the Incarnation. As Professor Dodd says in his recent penetrating study of *History and the Gospel*, the New Testament makes sense of the events recorded in the Gospel narratives only by recognizing in them "the entry into history of a reality beyond history."<sup>1</sup>

The "good news" proclaimed in the world at

<sup>1</sup> *History and the Gospel* (London, 1938), p. 181.



the beginning of our era was based on certain alleged historical facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified at Jerusalem yet affirmed to be alive as the Risen Lord. This astounding claim demanded some further and more profound interpretation, but before a theology was systematized by St. Paul, the original apostolic followers had borne witness to the Messianic mission of their Master. Thus, the Apostle to the Gentiles regarded himself as the exponent of a tradition which he had received from the Church (1 Cor. xv. 11 ; xi. 23-36). Like his predecessors he was a Jew, and from Judaism came the belief in one personal God and ethical transcendent Creator which was steadily maintained in the new Christian society. The apocalyptic hope, however, became a "realized eschatology" and absolute ethic, but carrying with it the same insistence that history has a real meaning in the working out of a divinely-ordained purpose. The Messiah having come and restored all things, the reign of God had begun according to the destined plan. The Cross and the empty tomb were eschatological events which had changed the whole course of history by ushering in the "age to come." Henceforth the redeemed lived under the dispensation of grace, having entered a new life of the Spirit as an eternal reality in a new order transcending the passing conditions of time and space.

Against Hellenic mysticism, the Græco-oriental Mysteries and Gnostic "Docetism" the Church maintained the historicity of its Founder and the Judaic foundations of its faith in this world of change as the divinely-appointed sphere of God's redemptive purposive activity. Not only was heaven and earth the creation of the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but the eternal Son was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead and buried, and rose the third day living from the dead. By insisting on this doctrinal succession with the apostolic teaching, the historical actuality of the ancient tradition was preserved, and Christianity placed on a basis of fact with which to confront the fantastic mythologies of the pagan cults and systems. Thus, for the first time Greek speculation met a dogmatic religion which could be accepted without mental reservations, and which yet supplied the deepest needs of the human soul.

The revelation of the fulfilment of the divine purpose in history produced the greatest spiritual revelation that the world has known, and has had a far greater influence on history than the powerful empires which Christianity conquered by weapons it alone possessed. If to-day religion seems to be a spent force in an age of unparalleled mechanistic achievement, nationalistic ambition and class-con-

sciousness, is it not largely because the Faith that triumphed in the Ancient East has lost its original message and significance in the modern West? From being the pivot of history and the dynamic of society, the religion of the Incarnation has been treated as an optional addition to life to be adopted by those who have a taste for metaphysical speculations and theological dictums, but of little practical value or importance except in so far as it makes for moral integrity and human kindliness. The thing that really matters is conduct, and while some men have an inclination for religion, others have not, but everyone must fashion his behaviour in an orderly manner for the common good of humanity.

Nothing can be more perilous to faith, ethics or society than to confuse respectability with the fundamental principles of life. The Christianity that conquered the world was a revelation of God which shook the very foundations of civilization—a declaration of divine judgement, a realized eschatology, a culmination of history in a process of redemption. “The Messiah had come, the reign of God had begun. Repent ye and believe the Gospel!” This was no mere evangelistic emotion-alism, no complacent pragmatism, or philosophic humanitarianism. It was the proclamation of a profound conviction of an historical fact interpreted in terms of ultimate reality, the acceptance or rejection

of which carried with it eternal consequences for the individual and the world. The Incarnation was the supreme historical event as Jesus was the unique historical Personality. In Him history had found a centre which gave it an ultimate meaning in the counsels of God and the affairs of men. Viewed thus, human society was an organic unity. Eternity had entered time, and the temporal had acquired an eternal significance. Redemption was nothing less than the creation of a new humanity within the corporate reality of a Divine Society related to the entire universe, physical, ethical and religious, through a Personality accepted by faith as ultimate and supreme. The conviction underlying this belief was grounded in reason and history. Only by the acceptance of the historical realities can the Faith be established in any age.

### *Religion and the Modern State*

With the return to the Church type of State we are now witnessing a new attitude to religion. With the retreat of Liberalism and the gospel of progress, gone is the dream of the steady march hand-in-hand of religion and science towards an earthly paradise, just as in Germany the drift in the direction of pantheism has been stayed by the drastic events of the present régime. But if a "crisis theology" has arisen as a counterblast to the "in-

ferred God " of science and metaphysics, religion has still been divorced from the facts of history and of human experience by regarding the truths revealed as supra-rational. Between the notion of the kingdom of God as a terrestrial millennium of social amelioration and correct ethical behaviour, and a transcendent other-worldliness remote from this whole plane of existence, lies the Christian interpretation of history briefly outlined above.

That the historical process is working towards a specific end is the belief equally of Communism and Christianity, as it was also of Judaism. Indeed the relentless opposition of Marxism to religion is largely the result of its being a rival dialectic. Unlike Liberal democracy it cannot afford to make terms with an enemy which declares that divinely-controlled spiritual forces alone give permanent significance to the course of events supposed by dialectical materialists to be merely the rational sequence of economic and political processes. Therefore, instead of trying to arrive at a working compromise or synthesis between religion and society in their respective spheres and activities, the totalitarian State in its Communist form is determined to rid social and ethical life of all traces of its religious inheritance.

Similarly, the Fascist type of organization, if less fundamentally hostile to religion in principle, in

practice is equally insistent on the complete domination of every aspect of human life and endeavour. If this control over the whole man is less apparent in the democracies, as Mr. Christopher Dawson has recently emphasized, the same process is gradually coming into operation in States which still pride themselves on the maintenance of liberalism and freedom. This is seen in the trend of educational policies, bureaucracy, nationalization, the social services, measures of defence and security. Indeed it is difficult to see how it can be otherwise in a highly-organized industrial civilization in a world swayed by power politics, class-consciousness, revolutionary aims and materialistic ambitions.

In the past, as it has been our purpose in this volume to demonstrate, religion has been the dynamic and consolidating force of society supplying a system of values reflecting the revelation of the spiritual and moral order upon which a sound social life has been maintained. Some transcendent reference over and above and external to society itself has been necessary to bind together the component members in harmonious and creative relations with each other for the common good of the whole. Human life finds its meaning and fulfilment in a community of persons in communion with a Supreme Personality, be he totem, divine king, ancestor, theocratic deity or

saviour-god, in whom are vested all the sources of the values and sanctions of the group. In the Christian revelation this sacred order has found its ideal and final expression in a divine fellowship of redeemed humanity bound together in relations of responsibility, mutual service and love towards all mankind as the children of a personal Creator Who is the God and Father of the Redeemer.

When these religious foundations are removed, society has to supply its own dynamic from within itself in the form of a human Leader to whom it is compelled to give some measure of divine attributes and qualities, and to invent an irrational mythology and a materialistic and secular interpretation of history. To take the place of a beneficent Providence, a real or assumed "enemy," or danger, is essential. These are the cohesive forces, with militarism or class-warfare as the creative purpose of the ultimate goal—a super-state or classless order with world-wide dominion. To maintain hope and faith society must be kept in a perpetual state of turmoil, social, economic and political, with strikes and wars and rumours of wars, for once let life become normal, stable and free from strife, and the "religious" fervour would wane. Such is the secular substitute for society as a spiritual organism and sacred order.

How is the Church to meet this new situation? Before anything can be done effectively the philo-

sophical and theological presuppositions must be recognized, and the rightful place and function of religion in the body politic determined. Hence this volume. Christianity has its roots in the past, and it can be no more cut off from its antecedents in antiquity than it can be separated from its own historical foundations. If it is a revelation of history giving a final meaning to history, it is also a product of history—the climax and centre of the historical process. Consequently the part played by religion in society throughout the ages is relevant to the consideration of the function that it can and ought to perform in the present and the future. In the past it has been the unifying and consolidating principle connected fundamentally with faith in Providence and the revelation of a moral and spiritual order.

To-day this conviction has given place to the belief in the self-sufficiency of man and of human effort and enterprise, with the result that society has become the victim of its own inventions, aspirations and achievements. If it is not to destroy itself it must re-establish its spiritual foundations and recognize that man is not the architect of human destiny, however much he may determine his own fate by the exercise of free-will. He is a created being dependent upon a beneficent and over-ruling Providence Who intervenes creatively in history. The function of the Church is



to make explicit the revelation it has received in terms applicable to the thought and circumstances of the age without apology or compromise. In so doing a distinction should be made between the central truths arising out of the historical reality of the Risen Christ, and the subsidiary background of ideas which have derived a permanent value from their association with the central tradition. Otherwise the fundamental truths may be undermined. It is the events that matter, not the theories about them. Therefore, the historic creeds are mainly an assertion of the essential facts even though metaphorical language may be employed to express ideas that lie outside human experience, as in the case of the heavenly "session" of Christ. That these official formularies are the authoritative affirmations of Christianity is beyond dispute, but, nevertheless, it should be made clear that they are so accepted not because the Church teaches them, but, conversely, that the Church teaches them because they are true.

Moreover, it has now been placed beyond reasonable doubt that faith and conduct cannot be separated, as T. H. Huxley imagined at the end of the last century. The only hope of correct ethical behaviour on the part of individuals, communities and nations is right belief about the fundamental facts of life in their divine and human relationships.

It is all-important, therefore, that the basic principles be securely laid on impregnable foundations. Neither obscurantism nor pragmatism can stand the test of time. Ultimately nothing can survive or prevail the truth of which is incapable of sound defence. Christianity cannot afford to follow the example of the totalitarian states in the creation of an intellectually untenable mythology. It must base conduct, private and public, on reasoned principles and a duly accredited theology, transcendent but having objective and historical validity. As Professor de Burgh points out in his recent Gifford Lectures, there is a "coincidence of unrest in the world of thought with the spread of unrest in the world of action."<sup>1</sup> To recover its equilibrium our age needs the steadying influence of rational judgement grounded in faith in God's eternal actuality and providential purpose beyond the chances and changes of human endeavour.

If this is to be realized a determined effort must be made to make religion really effective in modern society. The Edwardian synthesis of science and faith failed because it was based on a false philosophy of progress. Something much more enduring is required. Christianity can never fulfil its proper function till it becomes the integrative and directive force in human life shaping history in accordance

<sup>1</sup> *From Morality to Religion* (London, 1938), p. 299.

with divine purpose, as when the Gospel was first proclaimed in a civilization that had lost direction and nerve. In those days the Church stood against the world as the society of the "age to come" in "a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." It commanded the same kind of whole-hearted allegiance and self-surrender as is now demanded in the totalitarian states, and so it was able to issue its challenge and to put on the whole armour of God in mortal combat with the forces of the "prince of darkness" wherever they raised their standard. Against it was arraigned the proudest empire, and all the resources at its command, but without avail. When it crumbled into dust the Church remained because it was founded upon a rock.

In Christianity the religious values upon which social life has been based and consolidated find their fullest expression. Thus, Professor Malinowski, writing as an agnostic, does not hesitate to assert that "the affirmations of an ethical Providence, of Immortality, of the transcendental value and sense of human life" are "the eternal truths which have guided mankind out of barbarism to culture, and the loss of which seems to threaten us with barbarism again." In his opinion, "neither the modern political movements, Communism or Fascism, nor any other creed,

though perhaps immediately repaying and grossly satisfactory," can take the place of a religion which "satisfies man's craving for the Absolute, answers the riddle of human existence, and conveys the ethical message which can only be received from a Being or Beings regarded as beyond human passions, strife and frailties." <sup>1</sup>

Moreover, he is not alone among those who, while unable to give assent to the central tradition of the Gospels, nevertheless are alive to the crying need of a religious and spiritual basis of society. Thus, it is now becoming widely recognized in this country that the study of religion, especially in its cultural and philosophical aspects, should be given greater prominence in the curriculum of schools and universities. The policy of "secular education" is a lamentable legacy from the denominational controversies of the last century, and the theological obscurantism which was largely responsible for the feud between science and religion. Both are now happily becoming unedifying relics of the past. Consequently, serious efforts are being made in universities and colleges to provide expert teaching independent of denominational loyalties so that a body of properly qualified teachers will be available in the future to give intelligent instruction in these vital matters in schools as well as in the pulpit.

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Faith and Morals* (Oxford, 1936), pp. viii f., 61 f.

Much can be done in this direction, in the academic experience of the present writer, by the introduction of the scientific and philosophical study of religion as part of a non-theological degree course. In this way the place and function of religion in human society and social valuations can be demonstrated, and by a comparative investigation of the phenomena, the permanent separated from the temporary. As Robertson Smith pointed out at the end of the last century, when evolutionary ideas were still very suspect in theological circles, "it is a law of science that to know a thing thoroughly we must know it in its genesis and in its growth. To understand the ways of God with man, and the whole meaning of His plan of salvation, it is necessary to go back and see His work in its beginnings, examining rudimentary stages in the process of evolution."<sup>1</sup> This principle applies whatever view may be taken of the ultimate character of any given religious system. Such a line of approach should begin in the schools, in addition and supplementary to more specialized Biblical studies, which again must be pursued by all the aids of modern knowledge now available. In short, if a religious system of values is to become the guiding principle of our civilization, religion like science must be regarded as an essential element

<sup>1</sup> *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (London, 1892), p. 192.

in modern education and general culture, rather than the special preserve of ordination candidates and prospective ministers of a specific denomination.

But this, of course, is not all that is required. Primarily Christianity, or for that matter any other religion, is a way of life, not a theoretical system of knowledge. If it is to fulfil its proper function in society it must be apprehended by individuals in the totality of their being, intellectually, volitionally and emotionally, so that it becomes the directive force of their lives ; a living reality brought into direct relation with the actual problems of their own everyday experience, and of those of the world at large. These are days of adventurous service when, for good or ill, vast numbers of people are giving whole-hearted allegiance to causes which make tremendous demands upon them. Men are alive, as they never were before, to the real or supposed injustices and inequalities of life and nations, and if religion is to achieve its proper ends it must be able to call forth not less but even greater enthusiastic loyalty, devotion and personal service, regardless of the cost, and an increasing determination to establish the " reign of God " here and now.

It was out of a crisis, first in Judaism and later in the Roman Empire, that Christianity emerged and gave a new direction to history. This was accomplished not by the inception of schemes of

social reform and political ideologies, but by the gradual permeation of society by men and women whose lives were "hid with Christ in God." To-day men everywhere are beginning to feel the need of a spiritual philosophy of life and the world which will meet their deepest needs, answer the searching questions that perplex them, and give them an assurance of strength and direction here and hereafter. In a distracted age religion will achieve its purpose and function only if it is presented, not as an ethical ideal or aspiration, not as an intellectual proposition or pragmatic system, not even as an evangelical acceptance of Christ as Saviour and King; in short, not as anything less than the inbreaking on human history of God Incarnate bringing to a world undone the gift of a new and endless life.

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